

# Champion Trees of Harford County

## A GUIDE TO CELEBRATING SPECIAL TREES AT HOUSES OF WORSHIP



PHOTO CREDIT: JOLI McCATHRAN

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## How to Use This Guide

This guide features information about ten Champion trees located on the grounds of four houses of worship across Harford County. Please use this resource to learn more about these special trees and the grounds on which they reside. Download or print this document to take with you as part of a self-guided tour as you visit these special trees. Please be respectful of visiting hours and parking for each property on the self-guided tour.

### What is a Champion Tree?

Champion trees are the largest known tree of a given species in a particular geographic area. The size is determined by measuring the height of the tree, circumference of the trunk, and crown spread of the branches. Depending on the species, some champions are very large trees, and some champions are rather small. Champions can be recognized on a county, state, or national level. Champion trees are measured and assigned points. The tree with the most points of each species is considered the largest or champion. The formula for points is:

$$\text{Trunk Circumference (inches)} + \text{Height (feet)} + 1/4 \text{ Average Crown Spread (feet)} = \text{Total Points}$$

The Maryland Big Tree Program (MBTP) manages the Champion trees across the state and is associated with the Department of Natural Resources Forest Service. The MBTP is sponsored by the Maryland Association of Forest Conservancy District Boards. The Harford County Forestry Board is the local sponsor.

### Want to Learn More or Nominate a Tree?

Visit [www.mdbigtrees.org](http://www.mdbigtrees.org) for listings of Champion trees across Maryland.

Visit [www.allianceforthebay.org](http://www.allianceforthebay.org) to learn more about the Alliance's reforestation efforts across Harford County, Maryland, and the Chesapeake Bay region.

Are you a part of a faith community and want to be an advocate for clean water? Contact Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake to learn more about how you can make a difference in your community.



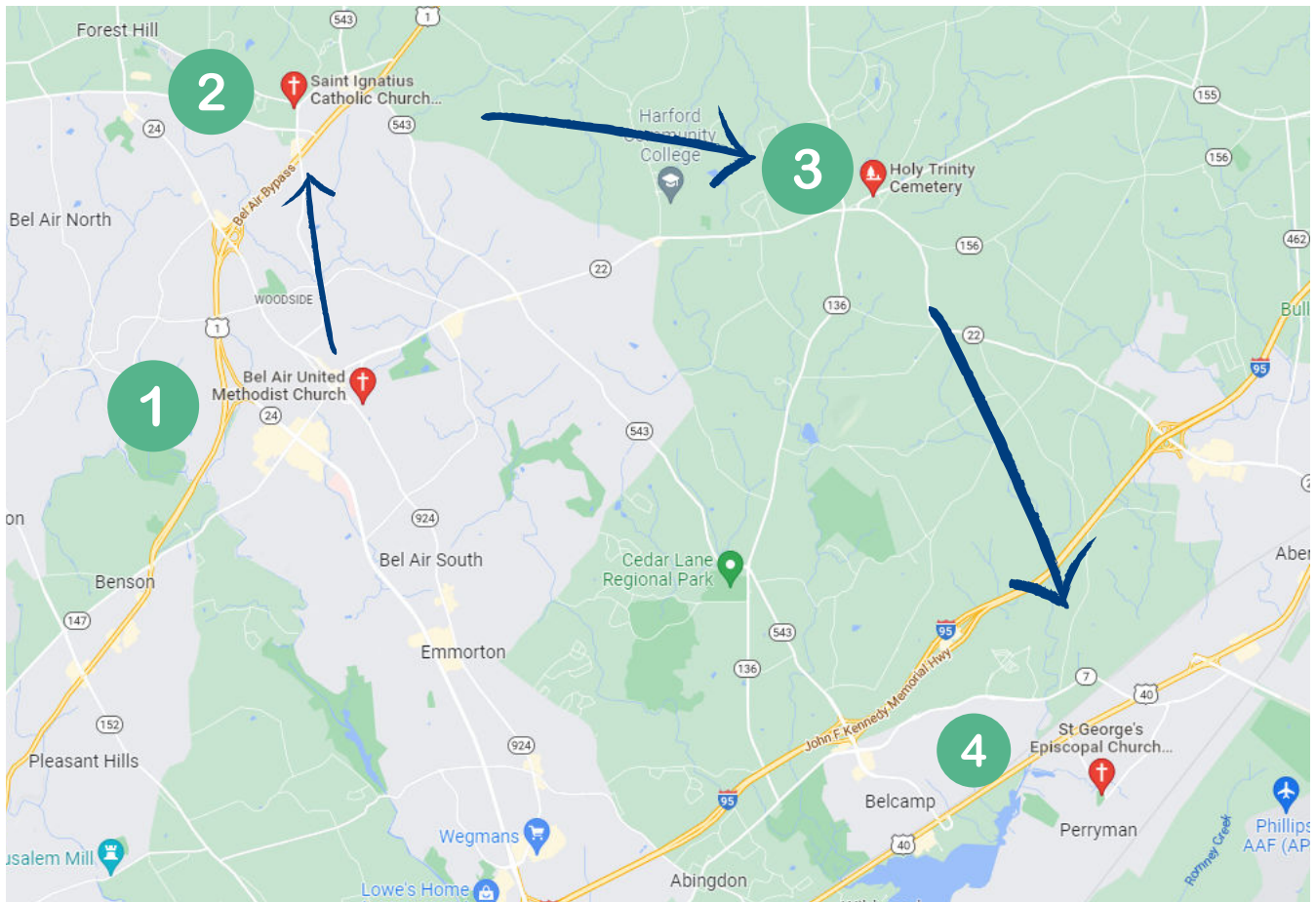


Location 1: Bel Air United Methodist Church  
221 Linwood Avenue, Bel Air, MD 21014

Location 2: St. Ignatius Church Cemetery  
533 E. Jarrettsville Road, Forest Hill, MD 21014

Location 3: Holy Trinity Episcopal Church  
2929 Level Road, Churchville, MD 21028

Location 4: St. George's Episcopal Church (Spesutia Church)  
1504 Perryman Road, Perryman, MD 21130



# Black Walnut

*Juglans nigra*

Bel Air United Methodist Church  
Harford County Champion - BT-3855

Year Nominated: 2021

Last Measured: 2021

Circumference (in inches): 158

Height (in feet): 114

Spread (in feet): 89

- Black walnut has long been prized by furniture- and cabinet makers for its attractive color and exceptional durability.
- The Black walnut's roots, which may extend 50 feet or more from the trunk, exude a natural herbicide known as juglone. It inhibits many plants' growth under and around the tree, thereby limiting the tree's competition, leaving more water and nutrients for itself.
- The fruit is quite heavy, the size of a baseball and colored lime green. Black Walnuts are nutritious and can be used in a variety of foods, or eaten by themselves.



Directions: 85' east of the tennis courts near the east edge of the property.

GPS: N39.532004 W76.339711



# European Larch

*Larix decidua*

Bel Air United Methodist Church  
Harford County Champion, Maryland State Champion - BT-1202



Year Nominated: 1998

Last Measured: 2012

Circumference (in inches): 115

Height (in feet): 91

Spread (in feet): 45

- This tree has not grown since its 1998 measurements.
- This species is native to the mountains of central Europe and is extremely cold-tolerant.
- Unlike other conifers (cone-bearing plants), European Larches drop their needles seasonally in autumn and winter.
- They are popular trees to plant in parks and residential settings.
- European Larches are important in European folklore, being traditionally considered to prevent enchantment and ward off evil spirits – infant children sometimes wore collars of larch bark as protection against the evil eye.

Directions: Tree is located at the edge of the parking lot in the SW corner between the mansion house and the church.

GPS: N39.53106 W76.34106

# Sassafras

*Sassafras albidum*

Bel Air United Methodist Church  
Harford County Champion - BT-3856

Year Nominated: 2021

Last Measured: 2021

Circumference (in inches): 136

Height (in feet): 88

Spread (in feet): 42.5

- The Sassafras distinct leaves come in three different shapes – entire, mitten-shaped, and three-lobed leaf. In fall, the leaves turn into beautiful shades of yellow, orange, and red.
- Sassafras comes from the Lauraceae family, which also includes some popular spices like cinnamon.
- It became the second-largest export from America to Europe after tobacco in the early 17th century.
- Sassafras leaves have a fragrant citrus-like scent when smashed. All parts of the plant, including the bark and twigs, are very fragrant as well.



Directions: 15' from Linwood Avenue north of the Mansion House. It is downslope in the midst of several larger trees.

GPS: N39.531562 W76.340812



# Austrian Pine

*Pinus nigra*

St. Ignatius Church Cemetery  
Bicentennial Tree, Harford County Champion - BT-2032



Year Nominated: 2009  
Year Last Measured: 2019  
Circumference (in inches): 79  
Height (in feet): 55  
Spread (in feet): 37

- This tree is a Maryland Bicentennial Tree, which means it is thought to have been alive since the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776!
- This tree is one of six Maryland Bicentennial Trees in Harford County.
- There is evidence of bark beetle damage on this tree. Sap is one of the first lines of defense of pines against bark beetles. Released sap or resins can plug bored holes of bark beetles and seal wounds. Resins also trap insect pests making some initial entry by bark beetles unsuccessful.

Directions: Publicly accessible and handicapped viewable. Tree located in the cemetery at the NE corner of the old church 7 feet from the edge of the church with the cornerstone.

GPS: N39.573834 W76.354536

# Littleleaf Linden

*Tilia cordata*

Holy Trinity Episcopal Church

Harford County Champion, Maryland State Champion, National Champion - BT-2634

Year Nominated: 2014

Last Measured: 2014

Circumference (in inches): 223

Height (in feet): 83

Spread (in feet): 74

- This tree has been the National Champion (the highest scoring Littleleaf Linden in the United States) since 2018.
- Holy Trinity Episcopal Church was founded in 1867 and the gothic stone building was built in 1877. It is likely this tree began its life around this time.
- The leaves are edible and can be brewed as a tea or used in salads. Honey from bees who frequent these trees is widely consumed across Europe.
- *Tilia cordata* is the national tree of the Czech Republic and Slovakia.



Directions: Publicly and handicapped accessible. Tree located in a grassy area 100' SE of the church parking lot, 120' from school and 100' from the road.

GPS: N39.561169 W76.246045



# American Beech

*Fagus grandifolia*

St. George's Episcopal Church  
Harford County Champion - BT-2283



Year Nominated: 2011

Last Measured: 2021

Circumference (in inches): 210

Height (in feet): 96

Spread (in feet): 87.5

- This tree is a co-champion, both American Beech trees have 330 points.
- Although Beech is now confined to the eastern United States (except for the Mexican population) it once extended as far west as California and probably flourished over most of North America before the glacial period.
- Beech seeds are distinctive and are commonly known as beech nuts. This tree is one of the few nut producing species in the northern hardwood varieties. Birds and other mammals such as squirrels, foxes, porcupines, raccoons, pheasants, black bears and wild turkeys often eat the seeds of the beech tree, as do people.

Directions: The tree is located in the graveyard of St. George's Parish 140 feet south of the church.

GPS: N39.474382 W76.204034

# Sugar Maple

*Acer saccharum*

St. George's Episcopal Church  
Harford County Champion - BT-2370

Year Nominated: 2012

Last Measured: 2012

Circumference (in inches): 185

Height (in feet): 69

Spread (in feet): 83

- Sugar Maple is the primary source for maple sugar and syrup.
- The fruits of maple trees are double samaras (winged seeds), but you may know them as “spinners” or “helicopters,” due to their characteristic descent to the ground.
- The growth capacity and range of sugar maples is being impacted by climate change. The lessening frequency of deep snow in New England is slowing the growth of sugar maple trees, which decreases the sap production needed to make maple syrup.



Directions: Tree located at south entrance to the cemetery off Perryman Road.

GPS: N39.47317 W76.20440



# Pitch Pine

*Pinus rigida*

St. George's Episcopal Church  
Harford County Champion - BT-2287

Year Nominated: 2011

Last Measured: 2021

Circumference (in inches): 74

Height (in feet): 85

Spread (in feet): 27.5



- The wood resists decay, which makes it useful for ship building and rough construction, mine props, fencing, and railroad ties.
- Pitch Pine cones often remain on the trees unopened for several years or until the heat from a forest fire opens them. Seeds shed in mid-winter are an important source of food for squirrels, quail, and small birds such as the pine warbler, pine grosbeak, and black-capped chickadee. White-tailed deer and rabbits also browse young sprouts and seedlings.
- The Iroquois tribes used it for its various healing purposes, including making poultices for wounds, burns, and joint pain.
- It was also used for carvings and canoe making by various indigenous tribes.

Directions: Tree located in NE corner of cemetery 100 feet due west from Spesutia Road and 50 feet due south of the gravel driveway on the property border.

GPS: N39.475272 W76.203669

# Southern Crabapple

*Malus augustifolia*

St. George's Episcopal Church  
Harford County Champion - BT-3836

Year Nominated: 2021  
Last Measured: 2021  
Circumference (in inches): 56  
Height (in feet): 34  
Spread (in feet): 31



- Southern crabapple is a deciduous flowering shrub to small tree with showy pink blossoms.
- Fruits are yellow-green, apple- to pear-shaped, and grow to about an inch in diameter. They are edible but are astringent and sour when raw due to the presence of malic acid. They are best when made into jelly or jam and are an excellent source of pectin (so no extra pectin is needed when making jelly or jam).
- The fruits are a main source of food for whitetail deer, bobwhites, grouse, pheasants, rabbits, squirrels, opossums, raccoons, skunks, foxes and plenty of small birds.

Directions: Tree is located 80' northwest of the church on the west line of the cemetery.

GPS: N39.475168 W76.204705



# Northern White Cedar, Arborvitae

*Thuja occidentalis*

St. George's Episcopal Church  
Harford County Champion - BT-3838



Year Nominated: 2021

Last Measured: 2021

Circumference (in inches): 101

Height (in feet): 94

Spread (in feet): 30

- The name Arborvitae or "tree of life" dates from the 16th century when the French explorer Jacques Cartier learned from the indigenous peoples how to use the tree's foliage to treat scurvy.
- Northern white-cedar is usually dominant in rich swamps that have a strong flow of moderately mineral-rich soil water.
- It has been traditionally used for construction, crafts, as well as medicine by the Ojibwa people. The twigs were also used for preparing teas to reduce headache and constipation.
- In the 1800s, the extracts were topically applied for the removal of thrush, warts, and other skin infections.

Directions: Tree is located 200' south of the church growing inside a square brick-faced small cemetery area.

GPS: N39.474128 W76.204082