NORTHUMBRIA
VETERAN TREE PROJECT

Measuring that tree

The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe investing in rural areas

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What is a veteran tree?

To help you decide what category the tree you find might fall in to please look at our guide...

1 Ancient Trees

The term ancient tree refers to those trees that have reached a great age in comparison to others of that species. For example, a birch tree would be considered ancient at 150 years old, where as an oak not so until 400 years of age. A yew tree that can live for thousands of years would not be defined as ancient until it reached at least 800 years of age. These trees would generally have typical characteristics such as being low, fat and squat, having a wide and often hollow trunk.

2 Veteran Trees

Unlike an ancient tree these trees can be of any age, however it is generally accepted that in order to qualify, these trees will normally measure 3M girth when measured at 1.5M. These trees will also however show ancient characteristics. This could be due to age but could also be as a result of natural damage, environmental impact or the result of previous management practice. Ancient trees are all veterans but not all veterans are ancient.

***You can differentiate between Notable and Heritage when submitting a tree, but for the purpose of the project, these are grouped together as Notable.**

3 Heritage Trees*

These are trees that are part of our culture and history. They might be connected to specific people or events, such as the major Oak in Sherwood Forest, or the Collingwood Oaks in Northumberland. They may also be of botanical significance such as the William Cleughs pines in Northumberland.

4 Notable trees*

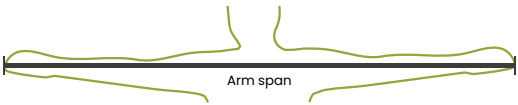
These are trees that are significant locally because they might be special or relatively large compared to other trees around them. They are normally mature, but not always. An example might be a Wellingtonia which is impressively large even when quite young.

Measuring that tree

So how do we measure those trees we find?

The accepted method to measure the trees you might find, which will be accepted for our project and the Woodland Trust ATI, is to measure the tree at a height of 1.5M.

In order to determine where 1.5 might be you could use a standard tape measure or a stick measured at this height. Another tip is to determine where 1.5 is on your own frame (in my case tip of nose!).



You can then use a standard tape measure and measure the trees Circumference. You can also use yours and friends arm spans as a guide to measure your tree if no tape is available.

There are exceptions to this rule

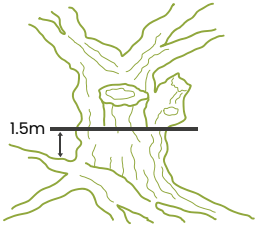
Not all trees are so straight forward with some branching before the 1.5M mark.

Trees with branching or swellings below 1.5 Metres

If you are unable to measure your tree at 1.5m because it swells abnormally below this point or the tree forks below that height then measure the tree at the highest point possible. Ensure that you then record the height you measured the tree at.

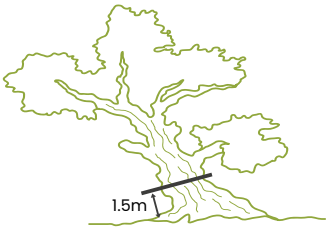
Trees on sloping ground

If a tree is on sloping ground, you need to measure the tree on the highest piece of ground at 1.5m, ensuring you keep the tape level around the tree's circumference.



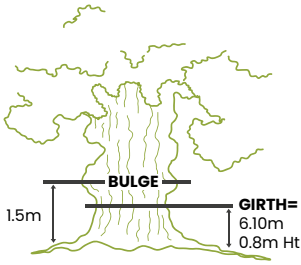
A leaning tree.

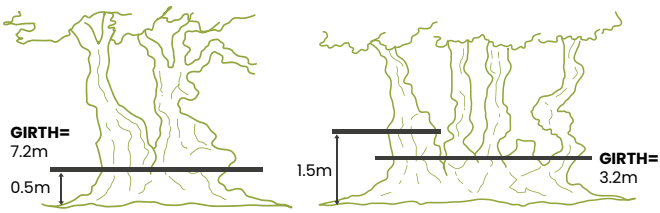
If a tree is leaning measure 1.5 metres from the underside and ensure your tape is perpendicular to the trunk.



A tree with a burr or swelling at 1.5M

Many older trees have growths or burrs on the trunk, which can exaggerate the trunks circumference. In order to ensure we get a true indication of the tree size it might be necessary to take a number of measurements below that 1.5 metre mark and when recording state, the height measured.





Twinned or multi stemmed trees

If stems arise from ground level and are obviously the same tree, treat as if this was a single stem. Find the smallest girth between the ground and 1.5 metres, measure this and state at what height this was measured.

If the stems arising are not of the same tree but possibly are the result of two or more trees being planted together (Bundle planting) record stems individually at the narrowest point between the ground and 1.5 meters and state the height measured.

Coppice stools

For Coppice stools the advice is to

- Measure around the whole coppice stool, measuring at the narrowest point
- Count and record the number of stems
- Measure the stems at 1.5m (Or largest ones)
- Record as you did multi – stemmed trees and record as a coppice

To get involved or find out more information about Northumbria Veteran Tree Project email

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