

INVASION



WEIRD TREES

Volume 5

The Twisted Saga Continues

2012 Edition

TREES....

....they come in all shapes and sizes. They fill the air with sweet, fragrant scents of spring blossoms, and splash the landscape with brilliant colors in the fall. They cool the air with their shade and provide a barrier against the harsh winter wind. They add beauty and comfort to our lives, as well as furnishing us with thousands of products we use every day.

But this booklet isn't about the beautiful trees, and it doesn't focus on the bounties of Mother Nature. It doesn't ask you to "thank a tree" for the oxygen you breath, or "hug a tree" in an affectionate display of gratitude. Some of the creatures featured in this publication might evoke more fear than affection. In fact, the thought of hugging some of these freaks of nature might be downright repulsive.

Have you ever been driving down a road or walking in a woods when you've happened upon a tree that is just so unusual that you are compelled to stop and stare? Have you ever said to yourself, "I wish I had my camera to capture this on film"?

Since the year 2000, many Hoosiers have been on a quest to do just that--to capture on film what words alone could not describe. After receiving hundreds of entries, our District Foresters employed a critical eye, years of arboreal experience, and sometimes a slightly twisted sense of reality to select the "weirdest" tree for each county. The results of their selections are highlighted in this booklet. If a previous winner was compared to its new competition and again judged to be the "weirdest" for that county, it retained its dubious title.

If your county is not represented, or if you know of a tree that you think is more weird than the one shown for your county, get your camera tuned up and your hiking boots ready. The deadline to enter the next Weird Tree Search is April 30, 2016 (entries are accepted anytime up to that date).

And now, witness the Invasion (if you dare to proceed).....

* denotes a tree that has retained its status from the 2008 edition of "Invasion of the Weird Trees" as the "weirdest" in its county

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The trees in this publication are arranged somewhat alphabetically. However, this has been a work in progress since the year 2000 and, until all Indiana counties are represented by a Weird Tree, will continue to be so. Therefore, as trees are added from previously unrepresented counties, they are placed where space is most readily available--usually toward the latter pages.

Adams.....	4	Hendricks	11	Perry.....	18
Allen.....	4	Henry	11	Pike	18
Bartholomew	4	Howard	12	Porter.....	18
Benton.....	4	Huntington	12	Posey	18
Blackford	5	Jackson.....	12	Pulaski.....	19
Boone	5	Jasper	12	Putnam	19
Brown	5	Jay	13	Randolph.....	24
Carroll.....	No tree	Jefferson.....	13	Ripley	19
Cass.....	24	Jennings	13	Rush.....	No tree
Clark.....	6	Johnson	13	Scott.....	19
Clay	6	Knox.....	5	Shelby	20
Clinton.....	7	Kosciusko.....	14	Spencer.....	20
Crawford.....	7	LaGrange	14	St. Joseph.....	20
Daviess.....	7	Lake	25	Starke	20
Dearborn	25	LaPorte	14	Steuben	21
Decatur.....	7	Lawrence.....	14	Sullivan.....	21
DeKalb	8	Madison.....	15	Switzerland	25
Delaware	8	Marion.....	15	Tippecanoe.....	21
Dubois.....	8	Marshall.....	15	Tipton	25
Elkhart.....	8	Martin.....	15	Union.....	No tree
Fayette.....	9	Miami.....	6	Vanderburgh.....	21
Floyd.....	9	Monroe	16	Vermillion.....	6
Fountain.....	9	Montgomery	16	Vigo	22
Franklin.....	23	Morgan	16	Wabash	22
Fulton.....	9	Newton	16	Warren	22
Gibson	10	Noble.....	17	Warrick	22
Grant	10	Ohio	No tree	Washington.....	23
Greene	10	Orange.....	17	Wayne.....	23
Hamilton.....	10	Owen	17	Wells	23
Hancock.....	11	Parke.....	17	White.....	24
Harrison	11			Whitley.....	24



Double vision
plagues home-
owner

*Adams county, submitted by
Ruth Brown



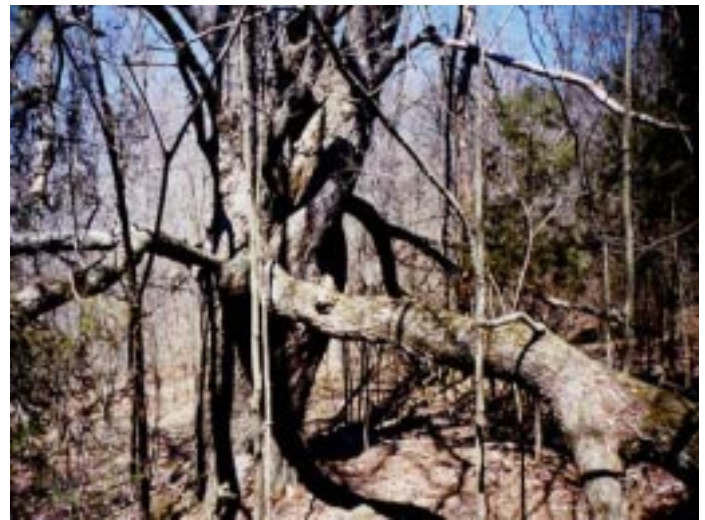
Flexing tree
fails to show
biceps

Allen county, submitted by
Candace Taylor



*Benton county, submitted by
Bonnie Dubich

Serpent in paradise
no longer peddling
apples



*Bartholomew county, submitted by
Mauri & Debra Young

Long arm of law
works undercover



Starving tree down to bark and bone

*Blackford county, submitted by Bonnie Dubich

New discovery: rare dachshund-giraffe-tree hybrid



Brown county, submitted by Henry Swain



*Boone county, submitted by John Artman

Loch Ness makes Hoosier appearance

Give me another "H"



*Knox county, submitted by Gary Rodney Smith



Woodland parasite consumes standing tree

Split personalities revealed



*Clark county, submitted by Amil Kleinert

Vermillion county, submitted by Orville Barnett

Cross between tree and elephant baffles scientists



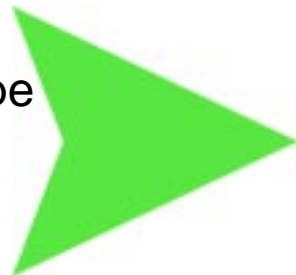
Miami county, submitted by Mary Ann Mast

Trees smooch in public as neighbors gossip



Clay county, submitted by Sheila Ter Meer

The Jack-alopec tree



*Clinton county, submitted by Nancy Martin



Crawford county, submitted by Lou Ann Bowman



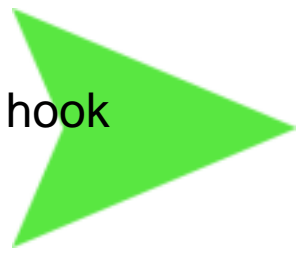
Daviess county, submitted by Sue Harper

“Close your mouth--you’re drooling”

Tree caught skinny-dipping in creek



Tree survives by hook or by crook



*Decatur county, submitted by Terry Wells



Reach out and touch someone

Planting rhinoserus trees may eliminate unwanted grass in your woods

*DeKalb county, submitted by Sirleine M. Smith



Delaware county, submitted by Rick Lopez



"X" marks the spot

Dubois county, submitted by Nancy Eckerle

Tree appears questionable



Elkhart county, submitted by Vernon Good



Tree tells fish story

Local tree getting too big for its britches

*Fayette county, submitted by Donald Hollcroft



Floyd county, submitted by Leonard Clutinger



Fountain county, submitted by Brittany Dossett

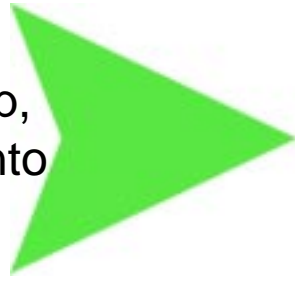
Man trapped in tree looks for way out

“Ugly duckling” aspires to be Christmas tree

*Fulton county, submitted by Laura Snipes



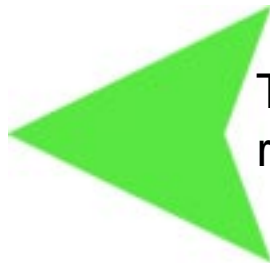
Tree puckers up, hopes to turn into a prince



Gibson county, submitted by Beverly Knight



*Grant county, submitted by Pat Eicher



Tree insists on right to bear arms



*Hamilton county, submitted by John Bundy

Keebler outsourcing work to local elves



I speak for the trees



Greene county, submitted by Ned & Miriam Malone

Every day a bad hair day



Hancock county submitted by Jim Cooper



Henry county, submitted by Velda Alcorn

Aria-singing tree hopes to join opera



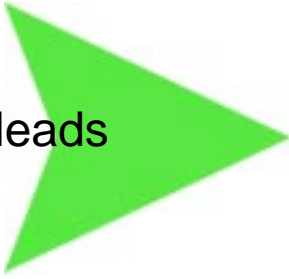
Hendricks county, submitted by Anna Lake



Harrison county, submitted by Kathy Peterson

Curious first attempt at integrated technology

Tree's severe acne leads to split personality



Howard county, submitted by Steve Wand

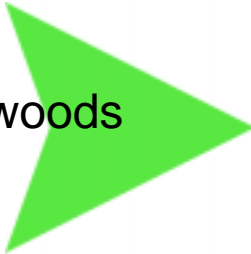


Huntington county, submitted by Dan Bickel

Doing sit-ups key to tree's long life



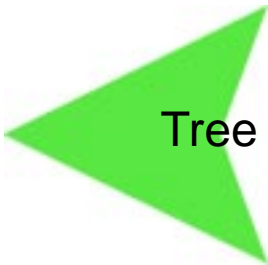
Son of Cyclops invades woods



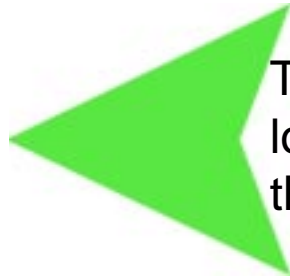
Jackson county, submitted by Michael R. Webb



Tree morphs into rhino!

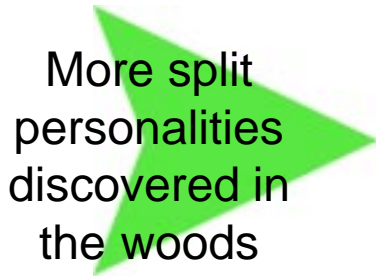


*Jasper county, submitted by Bernita Hagadon

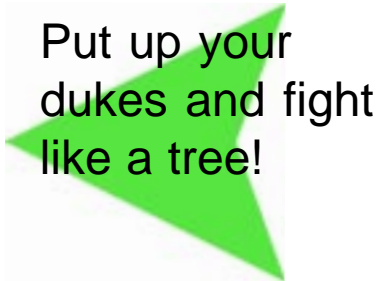


Tree found loafing on the job

*Jay county, submitted by Bettie Jacobs



More split personalities discovered in the woods

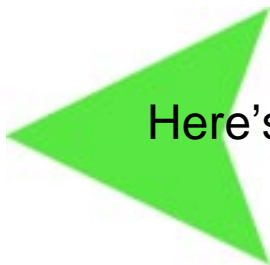


Put up your dukes and fight like a tree!

*Jennings county, submitted by Bill & Dixie Gerhard



*Jefferson county, submitted by Mike Underwood



Here's lookin' at ya!

Johnson county, submitted by April Trapp



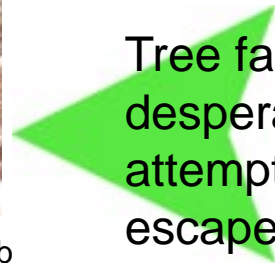
Kosciusko county, submitted by David Beyer



Forest plot takes unexpected twist



*Lagrange county, submitted by Renee Harville



Tree fails in desperate attempt to escape woods



Laporte county, submitted by Kitty Knoll



It's not paranoia--you ARE being watched

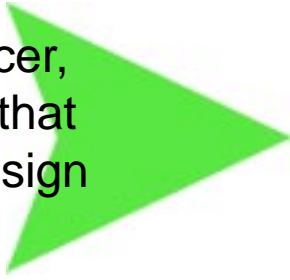
No razor can tame this tree's tough whiskers



Lawrence county, submitted by Sherry Hughes



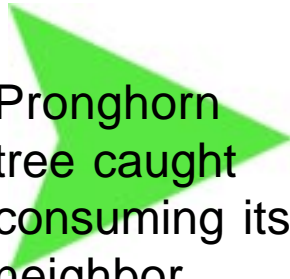
Honest, officer,
I didn't see that
No Parking sign



Madison county, submitted by Mike Harmeson



Pronghorn
tree caught
consuming its
neighbor



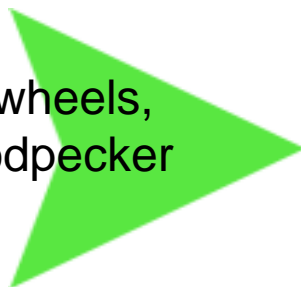
Marion county, submitted by Susan Ham

*Martin county,
submitted by Bonnie Dubich

Other forest trees
left out of the loop



Tree sprouts wheels,
becomes woodpecker
mobile home



Marshall county, submitted by
Joyce & Shelley Bockman



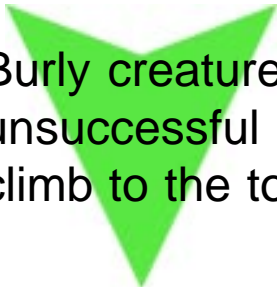
Monroe county,
submitted by
Whitney Baldwin

Forest boxer ready
for all challengers



Morgan county, submitted by
Denise Whitfield

Burly creature
unsuccessful in
climb to the top



Tree saves forest
from the plow



Montgomery county,
submitted by Jerry Turner

Something's
screwy around
here!



Newton county, submitted
by Robert Stuhlmacher



Noble county, submitted by Rick Meyer

Tree practices parallel parking in forest



*Orange county, submitted by Jim Cassidy

In each of us is an inner tree pushing to get out



Owen county, submitted by James Grubb

Paul Bunyan's first sewing needle found in Indiana woods

Beech tree undergoes bonding experience



*Parke county, submitted by Karen Staub

Perry county, submitted by Mary Alexander



Tree wins race by hugging the rail



Pike county, submitted by Wayne Myers

Adjacent trees caught making faces at one another

Porter county, submitted by David Berger



"C'mon, everybody, it's time to do The Twist!"

Now playing--The Cypress Swamp Woodland Choir



Posey county, submitted by Jim & Sheri Sloan



*Pulaski county, submitted by Steve Knebel

Enlarged heart puts tree at risk

Misguided memorial to hippo found in Indiana woods



Putnam county, submitted by Tim Bright

*Scott county, submitted by Mr. Weber



Doctor listens for seedling heartbeat in expectant tree



*Ripley county, submitted by Don Tolbert

Narcoleptic tree snoozes through first three decades

Tree's tenacles capture unsuspecting hiker



St. Joseph county, submitted by Ron Budzielek



*Spencer county, submitted by Bobby Joe Smith

Tree makes up for iron deficiency



Starke county, submitted by Tony Sato

Life-long dream to become a bridge fulfilled



Shelby county, submitted by Linda Richmond

Tree lured by snake charmer



Sullivan county, submitted by Faye Walters



Backyard amusement park feels the pinch

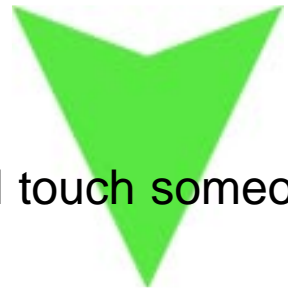
Tree tries to become bush in late career change



Steuben county, submitted by Jerry Gleason

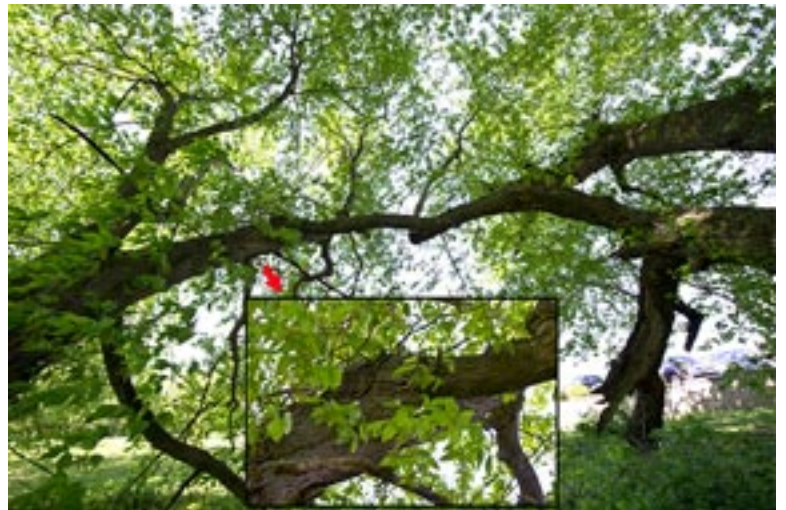


*Tippecanoe county, submitted by Marie Hamstra



Reach out and touch someone

Petrified pitchfork a clue to forest's agricultural past



Vanderburgh county, submitted by Kathy Funke



*Warrick county, submitted by John & Linda Gray



Vigo county, submitted by Keith Ruble

Open Arms Hotel
welcomes wildlife

Unusual reunion
of family tree

Medusa reincarnated
as a tree

Yes, diving in the woods was
not smart...now grab my leg
and pull me out, please!



Wabash county, submitted by James Hawkins



*Warren county, submitted by
Tony & Lynanne Martin



*Washington county, submitted by Paula Weaver

Don't worry, little fellas, we'll protect you



*Franklin county, submitted by Tim Hinderberger

Next time you need a hug, head to the woods



*Wayne county, submitted by Bob Mayer

Go IU!!!



*Wells county, submitted by Charles Neuenschwander



Woodland sage
retires to life in
the city



*Randolph county, submitted
by Sheila Corbin

Whitley county, submitted by Chuck Farris

Tree never learned
it's impolite to point

I am NOT
a crook!



Tree greets
neighbors
with open
arms



*White county, submitted by Eleanor L. Hickman

Cass county, submitted by Helen Dickman



Tree's attempt to swallow basketball fails; tree surgeon to be called in

Tipton county, submitted by William S. Paul

Networking trees make connection



Lake county, submitted by David & April Curtis

Tree bends over backwards to serve its owners



Dearborn county, submitted by Richard Middleton

Woods visited by former VP Hubert Humpree



Switzerland county, submitted by Gary Lynch

They're Weird—But How Did They Get That Way?



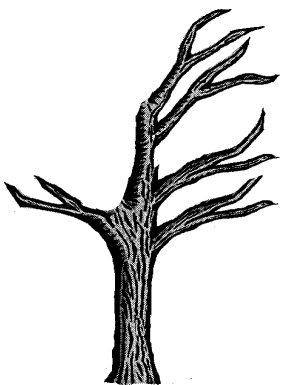
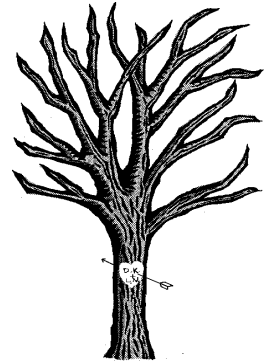
Science is founded upon explaining the unknown and making sense of the weird. But some freaks of nature even defy scientific explanation. The collection of weird trees displayed in this booklet provide a challenging exercise for modern investigators.

A team of highly trained and experienced DNR scientists agreed to examine these specimens and, if possible, determine the causes of their weirdness. Here are their findings:

SYMPTOM: Embedded object

DIAGNOSIS: A common notion about trees is that an object fixed to the tree will get higher as the tree grows. That is not correct. Trees grow from the tips of the branches, and once something is attached to the tree, it will not get higher over time. It will, however, be eaten. Trees grow not only in height, but also in girth. As the tree grows in diameter, it also will “eat” or grow around any object fixed to the tree or even next to it. Hence, a nail placed into a tree when it is only a sapling will be “consumed” and be deep inside the trunk when that tree reaches maturity. Trees will eat nails, wires, cables, signs, and fenceposts. Trees will even sprout and grow up through abandoned fence, machinery, or almost anything else. As the trees grow, they will slowly grow around any foreign object. Often, these deeply embedded objects cannot be detected when the tree is mature. Because these hidden objects can be very dangerous if they come into contact with a saw, it is not recommended to nail or fasten anything to a tree — The tree will eat it! Trees pictured in this booklet have embedded a sign and a fence post. The sign was obviously nailed to the tree, but the fencepost was placed too close to the tree’s trunk. These embedded objects cannot be safely removed. Over time, the trees will continue to “consume” the objects until the trees have completely embedded them inside the tree’s trunks.

—Jayson Waterman, District Forester



SYMPTOM: Unusual branching

DIAGNOSIS: Unusual or abnormal branching is normally the result of some type or injury. If the top of a tree is damaged, the side branches closest to the point of damage will turn up towards the sky and establish dominance. In other instances, a lower branch may become damaged or distorted. If it continues to receive enough sunlight to maintain growth, it will continue to grow in its distorted condition. Early Indian tribes have been known to bend the branches of trees to permanently mark the location of trails.

Insects such as mites, fungi and dwarf mistletoe can all cause the over stimulation of dormant buds which results in the formation of dense mats of branches commonly called witches’ broom. And lastly, sometimes the genetics of a tree just go a little haywire and you get branching that is unusual. Many common ornamental varieties that are prized for their unusual appearance are the result of natural genetic mutation.

—Chuck Ratts, District Forester

SYMPTOM: Multiple stems

DIAGNOSIS: Some multi-stemmed trees can be explained as a result of phototropism. Plants are attracted to light. When a tree is knocked or blown over, the side branches feel the need for light and grow toward it. It has been said Indians used to do this on purpose to identify hunting spots, or to give them directions through a woods.

Other trees with multiple stems are a result of stump sprouts. When a tree is harvested, buds beneath the bark sprout as a survival tactic. Their chance of becoming new trees is dependent on the size of the original tree and their location on the stump. Those closest to the ground have a better chance. Most hardwood trees will produce sprouts. Usually they will total 2, 3 or 4 stems. Some very weird trees may have more sprouts that originate higher on the stump. My wife and I have 3 Stump sprouts named Michael, Steven, and Eric. Also a secondary sprout, Alexandra was recently born to Steven and his wife Erin.

—Don Stump, District Forester

**SYMPTOM: Warts, Bumps and Burls**

DIAGNOSIS: Teenagers and witches take heart. Mother Nature has cursed some things beside you with ugly bumps and warts. Trees have bumps, warts, and burls. The teenager fears the facial bumps before a date, the witch looks much more evil with warts on her nose and chin, and nothing disfigures a tree quite like an unexplained burl. The teenager grows past his problem, the witch is only imagined, but the tree remains ugly forever. Best of all we learn to love and appreciate things because of their differences from the norm.



Whenever people see a tree with unique bumps and burls the question is, “Boy, what caused that?” I continue to ask the same question and receive answers from, “I don’t know.” to “We think maybe....” Insects, damage to the bark,

viruses, and mutated growth buds have all been suspected. Maybe we should just accept this unique gift and not ask why.

We do know that inside these ugly, abnormal growths is some of the most interesting grain patterns found in any wood. These distinct woods are highly prized for tables, clocks, bowls, and other decorative products. Few of us can look at these beautiful things made possible by ugly without wondering why. I think I want it to remain a mystery. That way I can enjoy creating my own explanation for each one I find and realize the value of diversity.

—Rex Gambill, former District Forester

SYMPTOM: Crooked or misdirected trunk

DIAGNOSIS: All plants grow upward, reaching for the sun! These examples of unusually growing trees provide a lesson in how persistent plants are in sticking to this rule. Each of these trees has experienced some physical damage. Perhaps a windstorm blew down another tree and it landed across this tree when it was much smaller. As side branches on that bent stem reached for light, they took over growth dominance. Many years later, these side branches now appear as the dominant stem(s) of the tree. Early Americans used this characteristic of trees to mark trails. A sapling bent over and tied down can be pointed in the direction of a trail. This growing trail marker will last for many years with no maintenance.

—Steve Marling, District Forester



SYMPTOM: Trees connected together

DIAGNOSIS: What appear to be natural grafts between two trees or between two branches of the same tree are not that uncommon. Anyone who spends a lot of time in the woods has seen this phenomenon. How does it happen? Apparently as the trees grow in diameter extreme pressure builds at the point where a projecting limb contacts another tree or another part of the same tree. If both members are parts of the same tree then both are genetically identical and a true graft may occur. If there are two trees of the same species then the genetic similarity may allow a true graft. The artificial grafting of fruit trees and ornamentals is a routine procedure involving tissue from trees of the same species.

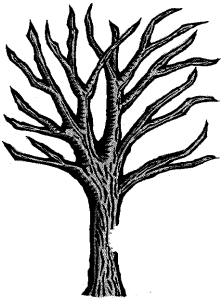


Where different species are involved a true graft would be far more difficult because of genetic incompatibility. What appears to be a true graft may be deceiving and there would be no way to know for sure without damaging the point of contact.

—Mike Coggeshall, District Forester

SYMPTOM: Indentations

DIAGNOSIS: Some indentations are caused by a canker, or fungus, which forms what appear to be “eyes” in the bark. The nectria canker can actually wrap completely around the tree and kill it, but usually only slows the growth of the tree. This fungus can be spread but is not commonly found in trees older than 20 years of age.



You may recall one tree with a person and dog inside it. Forest gnomes may exist according to this picture. This gargantuan tree, a sycamore, has hollowed out to form a large cavity within. Most likely, this tree has been periodically flooded a number of times and lies in low ground where water saturates the soil. This wetness can often cause decay from the inside out. An old injury from logs floating by in a flood or logging damage can also cause the tree to decay. Sometimes, coon hunters will “smoke out” a raccoon hiding within and the fire will burn out the center of the already hollow tree. Not a place I would want to be sheltered during a storm because the tree is probably the tallest thing in the woods and a prime target for lightning.

—Brad Rody, District Forester

SYMPTOM: Gnarly Trees**DIAGNOSIS:**

I thought that I would never see
A plant as gnarly as that tree,
And what has caused it such distress
To grow into such an ugly mess?

Could it be caused by site or genes
Or dirt compacted by machines
Which dig and fill to improve the land?
It could be more than a tree could stand.

Or are they like the human race
Which accompanies aging with a wrinkled face
And twisted joints and stiffened limbs.
Would they call us “old gnarly stems?”

—Steve Brandsasse, District Forester



WARNING

We know there are more weird trees out there. We advise you to always take the following precautions:

1. Never go to the woods without a camera
2. Be sure to have plenty of disc space and battery power if shooting digital, or film if using a film camera

DO NOT BE CAUGHT IN THE WOODS UNPREPARED!

