

Iowa DNR News

CONSERVATION AND RECREATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 22, 2025

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Celebrate Iowa's big trees this Arbor Day

Iowa's trees tell a story of resilience, history, and ecological importance. These towering giants serve as living landmarks, connecting communities to Iowa's rich forestry heritage while highlighting the vital role trees play in our environment.

The Big Trees of Iowa program, coordinated by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Forestry section, celebrates the largest known specimens of each tree species in the state. Knowing of these impressive trees helps document growth potential, draws public attention to trees and encourages friendly competition.

Explore Iowa's Big Tree Registry online

at <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/db8a533a6ca34fc89a3df0603b6b2cb4/>.

Volunteers are needed to learn the art and science of big tree hunting to help verify dimensions of nominated trees, monitor growth and explore and record unknown record-sized trees. Larger trees are likely out there - possibly in your neighborhood or backyard.

One dedicated volunteer has steadfastly crisscrossed Iowa in search of ever bigger specimens for decades and kept tabs on big trees he first measured in boyhood. Learn more about his obsession with big trees in the [Spring 2025 Iowa Outdoors magazine](#).

Thank trees for all they do

Get out and enjoy the beauty of April tree blossoms across Iowa neighborhoods.

Trees quietly enhance our daily lives in many ways. They're like superheroes for our health.

Neighborhood trees are like natural air filters, cleaning up the air we breathe and making it fresher. They also help us feel less stressed and more focused. Being around trees has been shown to make us feel better both mentally and physically.

Here's some fun options to celebrate trees near you this Arbor Day and throughout the year.

- **Plant a Tree.** Follow [DNR foresters' tree planting tips](#) to help it survive and thrive.
- **Visit a Park and Adopt a Tree.** Choose a particular tree to observe. Get better acquainted with your chosen tree by using your senses of sight, touch, hearing, and smell to describe the tree. Find more fun family activities to do when visiting on the [Project Learning Tree Exploring a Local Park webpage](#).
- **Read a Book About Trees.** Visit your local library and ask for books about trees.
- **Discover what trees are growing around you.** [Iowa's 10 Most Common Urban Trees](#) can help you identify trees in your yard or neighborhood and learn more about each kind of tree.
- **Learn how to prevent wildfires.** Smokey Bear lives within us all! While at home or on a camping trip, follow [these important safety tips](#).

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Plan regular cleanings for bird feeders, waterers and baths

Spring weather arrived and with it, the annual spring cleaning and garden prep rituals going in backyards and acreages across Iowa.

Iowans who set out bird feeders and waterers are encouraged to include regular feeder cleaning as part of their annual to do list, to avoid unintentionally spreading disease among birds that frequent these feeders.

Clean bird feeders and waterers with a 10 percent bleach solution about once each month and make sure the feeder is dry before refilling it with seed. Hummingbird feeders should be cleaned every 3-5 days with hot water and dish soap or with the

10 percent bleach solution, and rinsed thoroughly, and bird baths should get fresh water and a good scrub at least once per week.

Of equal importance to disinfecting the feeder is cleaning up spilled seed and bird droppings below feeders.

Be sure to wear rubber gloves while cleaning the feeders, since humans can contract some diseases, such as those caused by some Salmonella bacteria, from affected feeders or sick birds. If people do find sick birds at their feeders they should take the feeders down for at least two weeks to help stop the spread of disease and contact the DNR.

Feeder birds are not typically impacted by avian influenza, which circulates mostly in waterfowl, shorebirds, and waterbirds, and unless there are waterfowl using the feeders, there is no concern with continuing to feed.

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