

## The Life of a Champion

*Why did a tree that usually grows in swampy, warm climates of the southern United States end up in Wisconsin?*

*How did the planting of this tree symbolize the healing of a family?*

*What obstacles did this displaced tree overcome to grow to be a champion--the largest Bald Cypress in Wisconsin? Read on for the answers.*

The Rhodes family settled in the area that was to become Bong Recreation Area. Their son, John had a hobby. He collected trees during his travels to plant in their yard.

John's daughter Mary, married and moved to Louisiana against her family's wishes. When John finally visited Mary, he brought home the Bald Cypress and planted it to celebrate their reconciliation.

The Cypress endured freezing cold which left 3-4' long cracks in its trunk. The family also repeatedly cut the stabilizing knees that normally would provide the tree with oxygen.

Despite all these obstacles, the tree has been alive more than 100 years and has grown to an amazing 46' tall with a crown measuring 41' and circumference totalling 10' 9".

## Champion Trees

The National Champion Tree Register began in 1940. Wisconsin began its own program the following year.

Three measurements determine if a tree qualifies as a Champion.

\*Height--determined using an official measuring device or a ruler and geometry.

\*Crown Spread--an average of the widest and narrowest part of the crown.

\*Circumference--the distance around a tree at 4.5' above the ground.

A point is given for each foot of height (H), each inch of circumference (C) and a quarter point for each foot of crown (S).

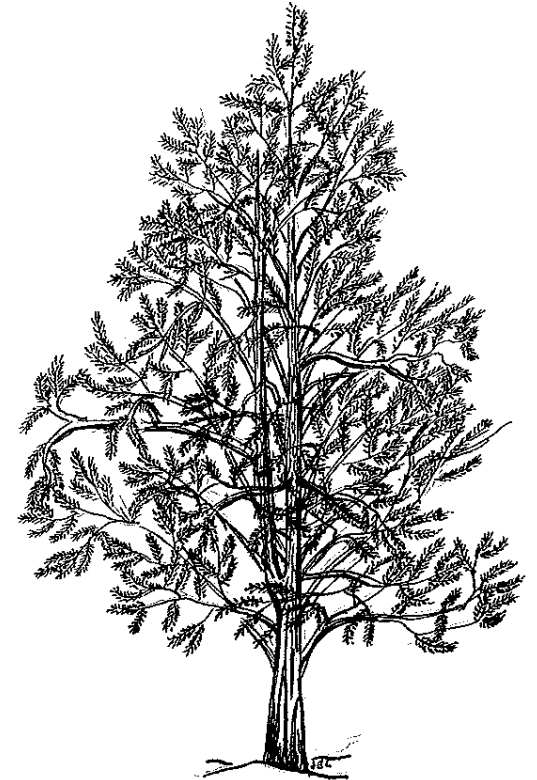
The total points= $H+C+(.25XS)$

The Bald Cypress tree at Bong State Recreation Area has a point total of 184.75. See if you can arrive at that number using the formula.

For a nomination form for your backyard champion tree write:

DNR Champion Tree Program  
PO Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707.

# Richard Bong State Recreation Area's Champion Tree

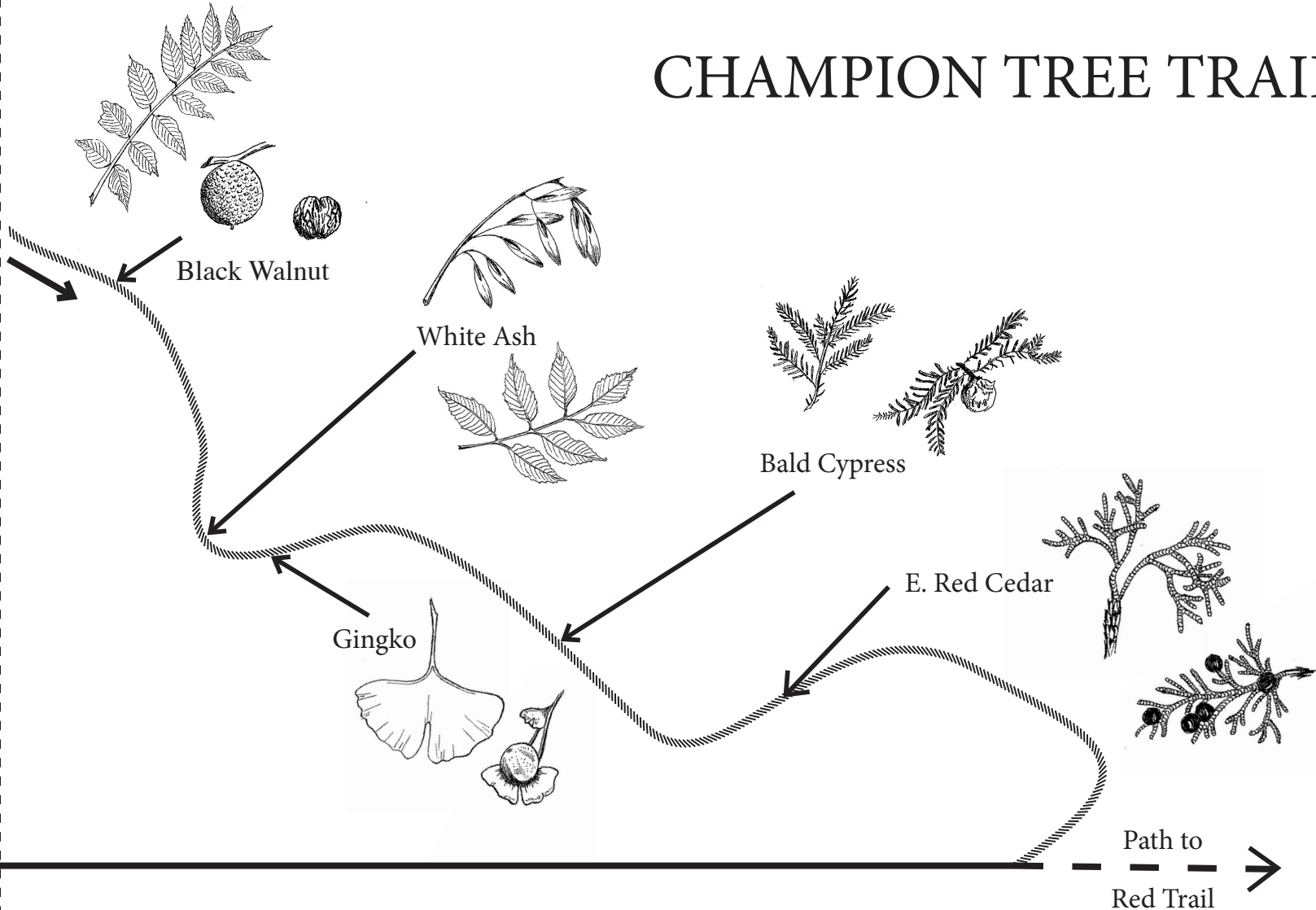


*Bald Cypress  
(Taxodium distichum)*

# CHAMPION TREE TRAIL

Rhodes Road

To Entrance Station



Find a champion tree in your backyard!  
See back page for details.



Scale: 1/32" = 1'

Directions: From the park entrance, cross Hwy 142 onto the service road (Rhodes Road). The Champion Tree Trail begins approximately 1/2 mile north of the highway on this road.

\*\*NOTE--Motorized vehicles are not allowed on Rhodes Road.