The largest known Chinkapin Oak in Michigan is located in the city of Ann Arbor in Washtenaw County in the southeast part of the Lower Peninsula.

Description of the Species: The Chinkapin Oak belongs to the family Fagaceae or Beech family. Besides the oaks, all of which are distinguished by the production of acorns, other members of this family in Michigan include the American Beech, European Beech, and the American Chestnut. The Chinkapin Oak can be distinguished from all other oaks in Michigan by having leaves which are coarsely toothed (see Fig. 1) rather than being entire, lobed, or deeply cut, and by having acorns which are sessile or short-stalked. In Michigan this tree occurs only in the southern half of the Lower Peninsula.

Location of Michigan’s Big Tree: The largest known Chinkapin Oak in Michigan is located in Wurster Park in the city of Ann Arbor. The tree can be reached by taking I-94 to exit 175 (Ann Arbor-Saline Road) toward Ann Arbor. This becomes Main Street in downtown Ann Arbor. Continue north on Main Street past the University of Michigan Stadium. Turn left on Mosley Street and go five blocks to Wurster Park. Or, if you miss Mosley Street, turn left on Madison Street and go for six blocks to the park. This is a small park and the tree is easy to spot on a slope above the grassy center of the park. In addition to the Chinkapin Oak, the park has a very nice 175′ Red Oak. The GPS coordinates for the Chinkapin Oak are N 42° 16.314′ and W 83° 45.261′. Thanks to Gail McPherson of Global ReLeaf of Michigan and Richard Pomorski of the Michigan Big Tree Hunt Committee for help in locating this tree.

Description of Michigan’s Big Tree: The tree has a single solid, healthy trunk. Its girth at 4½′ above the ground was measured on 30 July 2003 at 215″ (5.5 m). The tree was 120′ (36.6 m) high and had a crown spread of 62′ (18.9 m). The total points for this tree are 215 + 120 + ¼ × 62 = 351.

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

If you would like to join in extending this series of articles by visiting and describing one or more of Michigan’s Big Trees please contact Elwood B. Ehrle at woodyehrle@aol.com for help with locations, specifications for taking measurements, and assistance with the manuscript. The Michigan Botanical Club encourages your involvement in this activity. Please remember to ask permission
before entering private property. For the most recent list of Michigan’s Big Trees see Ehrle (2003).

LITERATURE CITED

