The largest known Norway spruce trees in Michigan are located in Jackson and Ottawa counties in the southern portion of Michigan’s lower peninsula. One is considerably taller. The other has a larger girth. Overall, they are close enough to be designated as state co-champion trees.

**Description of the species:** Spruce trees can be distinguished from other evergreen trees in Michigan by having needle-like leaves which are stiff and not flexible. The leaves are borne singly and are more or less 4-sided (Fig. 1), making them easy to roll between thumb and forefinger. The leaves of hemlocks, firs, and Douglas firs are flattened, soft, and flexible. The leaves of the Norway spruce are usually 1–2 cm long and the large cones (6–15 cm long) have cone scales with finely toothed margins. The cone scales are stiff and woody, and the buds are orange-brown. The secondary branches are pendent, making it possible to recognize the species from a considerable distance.

**Location of Michigan’s Big Trees:** The Jackson County tree is located north of Parma, MI at the home of Fred McNeil, 9498 County Farm Road. To reach the tree, take I-94 to exit 130. At the end of the ramp, go under the underpass and continue north onto Parma Road. Go only 0.2 mi north to County Farm Road and turn right (east). Go 1.4 mi to Wellman Rd. The tree is in the front yard of the McNeil farmhouse at the intersection of County Farm and Wellman Roads and can be easily seen from the road.

The Ottawa County tree is located north of Spring Lake, MI at the home of Douglas Knight, 18201 Fruitport Road. To reach the tree, take Rt. 31 through Grand Haven, MI. As you come over the drawbridge turn right onto MI 104. At the third traffic light, turn left onto Fruitport Road and go north about 1.5 mi. You will pass the Spring Lake Country Club on your right and go over a small bridge before coming to Kelly St. on your right. Just past Kelly St. is a sign marking Louis Lane. This is the driveway of 18201 Fruitport Road and several other homes. Turn left onto the asphalt driveway. The tree is on the right side of the driveway between Fruitport Road and the house.

**Description of Michigan’s Big Trees:** Both of these trees are healthy and have single solid straight trunks. The Parma tree (Jackson County) was measured by Stephen Johnson and Elwood B. Ehrle on 17 November 2002. Its girth at 4 1/2′ above the ground was 175″. The tree was 75′ high and had an average crown spread of 67′. Two large branches come off the trunk at 5′ and a large scar oc-
curs on the main trunk where a third branch was attached. The tree is somewhat rounded at the top and appears to have lost part of its height sometime in the past.

The Spring Lake tree (Ottawa County) was measured by Douglas Knight and
Elwood B. Ehrle on 20 November 2002. Its girth at 4 1/2′ above the ground was 170″. The tree was 93′ high and had an average crown spread of 71′. One major branch arises from the trunk just about 5′ from the ground. The tree is well shaped and has the narrowing spire expected of spruce trees.

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 for help with the 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.

LITERATURE CITED