

STATESVILLE

Champion Big Tree found in Lake Norman State Park

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This Carolina buckthorn tree was recognized as as a Co-Champion Big Tree. This tree was found in Lake Norman State Park.

A tree, despite its name, not commonly known in North Carolina, was found in Lake Norman State Park in January.

The North Carolina Forest Service certified a Carolina buckthorn as a Champion Big Tree and listed it on the North Carolina Register of Big Trees.

On Jan. 28, the N.C. Forest Service certified that a Carolina buckthorn, *Rhamnus caroliniana*, growing at Lake Norman State Park, is a co-Champion tree.

On Oct. 2, 2019, Friends of Lake Norman State Park volunteer Greg Schneider located several buckthorn trees in the park.

Carolina buckthorn is a shrub or small tree native to North America, but contrary to its name, is not commonly found in North Carolina.

One tree stands out as it is nearly 30 feet tall, while buckthorns average less than 20 feet in height.

State Park rangers Will Ruark and Chase Bennett, along with Forest Service Assistant County Ranger Danny Brasington and Service Forester Ryan Beeson, later measured this tree and found that it is 29 feet tall, has a 12-inch circumference, and an average crown spread of 19 feet.

The other co-Champion buckthorn grows in Rutherford County.

Since the 1970s the North Carolina Champion Tree Program has recognized and celebrated the state's largest native trees. This buckthorn is the only Champion Tree known in Iredell County.

Source: https://www.statesville.com/news/local/champion-big-tree-found-in-lake-norman-state-park/article_9b5cba11-cd0e-56cb-a77f-d22b8e4d1b76.html