

HOW WIDE?

By measuring the widths of trees, foresters can learn a lot about Oregon's forests. For example, they can assess how well the trees are growing, or estimate how dense the forest is.

Since a tree's trunk is often wider at the bottom than higher up, foresters use DBH, which stands for "diameter at breast height," as the standard measure. DBH is the diameter of a tree trunk measured at 4.5 feet above the ground.

Directions: Use one or both of the following methods to estimate the width of a tree.

RULER METHOD

1. Measure 4.5 feet from the ground and hold the ruler against the tree at that height. Keep the ruler on one plane. Don't "wrap" it around the tree.
2. Close one eye and visually line up the left edge of the ruler with the left edge of the tree. Read the measurement where the right side of the tree visually lines up with the ruler.

DBH: _____
(Be sure to include the unit – inches or centimeters.)



TAPE MEASURE METHOD

1. Measure 4.5 feet from the ground and wrap the tape measure around the tree at that height. Note the measurement where the end of the tape measure meets up with the rest of the tape. This is the tree circumference.

Tree circumference: _____
(Be sure to include the unit – inches or centimeters.)

2. Using a calculator, divide the tree circumference by 3.14 (π). The resulting number is the tree's DBH.

DBH: _____
(Be sure to include the unit – inches or centimeters.)



Did You Know?

The widest known living tree in Oregon is a California bay laurel in Curry County. Its DBH is 20.9 feet (6.37 meters).