

# Where Are the World's Oldest Trees?



People in many parts of the world will celebrate Arbor Day this month. They often celebrate the day by planting trees. Many of the trees people plant on Arbor Day this year might live for 100 years or more. Some might live much longer. Experts say that 50 of the world's longest-living trees have been around for more than 1,000 years. Some of them were growing before the ancient pyramids of Egypt were built!

The **Giant Sequoia** (suh-QUOY-uh) is the world's *largest* tree. One giant sequoia is also one of the *oldest* known trees. It is 3,500 years old. Giant sequoias grow in groves on mountain slopes in eastern California where summers are dry and winters are snowy. The sequoias are one of three types of trees known as *redwoods*.

The **Bristlecone Pine** is a long-living tree found in high mountains of the southwestern United States. The oldest bristlecone is 4,700 years old, which makes it the oldest tree in the world. The tree is located in California, but its exact location is kept secret because an even older bristlecone was cut down 45 years ago.

The **Alerce** (uh-LAIR-say) is a very tall evergreen tree. It is the largest tree species in South America. The oldest alerce, which is located in Chile, is 3,639 years old. Many years ago, people in Chile used thin pieces of the alerce's wood as money.

The **Sugi** (SOO-gee), which grows in Japan, is often called the Japanese Cedar. It can grow to be 230 feet tall. It looks similar to a giant sequoia, but it has harder bark and longer leaves. The sugi was often planted along roads that led to temples. Many sugis planted along those roads centuries ago are still living today. The oldest is 3,000 years old.

The **Huon Pine** (YOO-ahn) grows in the wet southwestern corner of Tasmania, Australia. It is a slow growing and long-living tree. The oldest one is 2,500 years old. For many years, the huon was cut down for its beautiful golden wood. Today, however, laws protect the huon from being cut.

## THINK ABOUT THE NEWS

If you could plant any tree on Arbor Day, what kind of tree would you plant? Why did you choose that tree?

## HOW DO WE KNOW A TREE'S AGE?

The age of the oldest trees can be determined by counting the number of growth rings in their trunks. Scientists use a tool called a *borer* to cut out a pencil-thin core of the tree from its edge to the center. Coring does not harm the tree.