



Save-the-Redwoods League

Protecting ancient forests since 1918

Our mission is to preserve ancient forests so that all generations can experience the inspiration and majesty of these towering giants.

In 1850, there were nearly 2 million acres of ancient coast redwood forests in California. Today, approximately 4-5% of the ancient redwoods remain.

Since 1918, Save-the-Redwoods League has led efforts to protect the ancient coast redwood and giant sequoia in California from logging and development. The League is the only organization working throughout the entire redwood range – from the Oregon border to the southern region of the Big Sur coast – to protect the serenity and grandeur of these ancient forests.

Today, more than six out of every ten acres of protected redwoods in California State Parks have been preserved through the work of the League. Through purchase and advocacy, the League has assisted in the preservation of hundreds of thousands of acres of redwood forest.



Photograph by Howard King

The ancient redwood forest is a treasured part of our heritage as Americans.

Join Save-the-Redwoods League and help us preserve these majestic forests for today and for all time. To become a member, call us at 1-888-836-0005 or log onto www.savetheredwoods.org.

Contributor	\$25
Family	\$50
Sustainer	\$100
Benefactor	\$250
Steward	\$500
Redwood Leadership Society	\$1,000

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114 Sansome Street, Suite 1200
San Francisco, CA 94104

Toll Free (888) 836-0005 www.savetheredwoods.org



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Photograph by Howard King

Coast Redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*):

California's magnificent coast redwoods are one of the world's oldest trees. In the most favorable parts of their range, they can live more than two thousand years. However, ancient coast redwood are rare – only about 4-5% of the original forest remains today. The largest surviving stands of ancient coast redwood forest are at Humboldt Redwoods State Park, Redwood National and State Parks, and Big Basin Redwoods State Park.

The coast redwood is one of the world's fastest growing conifers. Trees several hundred years old stand up to 240 feet tall with diameters at breast-height of 10 to 15 feet. The tallest trees have been measured at over 375 feet. In marked contrast to tree size, redwood cones are tiny – only an inch long. Each cone contains 14 to 24 tiny seeds. The seeds are so small that it would take well over 100,000 seeds to weigh a pound! In good conditions redwood seedlings grow rapidly, more than a foot per year in some instances. Young trees also sprout from their parent's roots, taking advantage of an established root system and the energy and nutrient reserves contained within them.

Its scientific name, *Sequoia sempervirens*, comes from the Cherokee Indian Chief Sequoyah (1776-1843) and *sempervirens*, Latin for "evergreen." The more common name, redwood, refers to the color of its bark and heartwood. The high tannin content of the wood gives the trees remarkable resistance to fungal disease and insect infestation. The thick, fibrous bark has even higher tannin content and insulates the trees from the periodic fires that have occurred naturally over the centuries in the redwood region.

Redwoods were once much more widespread than they are today. Paleobotanists have discovered fossil redwoods throughout what is now the western United States and Canada, Northern Mexico, and along the coasts of Europe and Asia. Based on the fossil record, redwoods have been present in their current range for about 20 million years. It is generally believed that the last ice age may have forced the coast redwoods into their present range: a narrow 450-mile strip from central California to southern Oregon, which is rarely more than 30 miles from the Pacific Ocean. In this "redwood belt," temperatures are moderate year-round; heavy winter rains and dense summer fog provide the trees with much needed water during an otherwise drought-prone summer in this Mediterranean climate zone. In fact, redwoods create their own "rain" by capturing the fog on their lofty branches. In this way they contribute moisture to the forest in the driest time of year.

The coast redwood forest is a perfect recycling system. The soil (like that in any high-rain-fall climate) contains low levels of the nutrients all plants require. Most of the substance necessary for life is in the trees themselves, living and dead, and in the other plants and animals of the forest. If trees are removed from the forest, instead of being allowed to die and decay naturally, many nutrients are lost from the cycle.



Photograph by Stephen Corley

Giant Sequoia (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*):

California's enormous giant sequoia is the world's most massive tree and one of the oldest – most giant sequoias are 2,000 to 3,000 years old. The oldest recorded tree is over 3,200 years old. The giant sequoia can grow to be more than 250 feet tall (about 25 stories) with trunks as wide as 30 feet. Once more common, the earth's last giant sequoia forests comprise a mere 37,000 acres in 67-70 scattered groves. Located along the western slopes of the Sierra Nevada mountains between 4,500 to 7,500 feet in elevation, the giant sequoia groves are priceless relics from the past.

Giant sequoias live a very long time and grow quickly, which is the reason for their massive size. In order to thrive, a giant sequoia needs moist, well-drained soil and lots of water. They require thousands of gallons of water each day and get most of it from snowmelt that has soaked into the ground. They are strong and hearty trees, yet compaction of the shallow roots by people and animals walking too near has damaged more than one lofty monarch.

The bark of the giant sequoia can be up to two feet thick, keeping the tree cool in summer and protecting it from cold, wind, and snow in winter. The bark, which has almost no combustible resins, also protects the tree from wildfires. Tannins in the bark and compounds in the richly-colored heartwood protect the wood from rot. A fallen monarch can remain on the ground for many centuries after the tree dies. These resilient trees can sprout new branches after losing as much as 95% of their foliage from fire and continue to live and grow for centuries. Naturally occurring fires that create large openings in the forest (more than two acres) allow successful establishment of young giant sequoias - some may even become the monarchs of the future. Over the years, fire suppression has encouraged the growth of a dense, brushy understory and reduced the likelihood of giant sequoia reproduction.



Photograph by Ernie Braun

Famed for their stature, many giant sequoias were named for Civil War leaders and generals. The largest giant sequoias are in the appropriately named Giant Forest in Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks:

- The General Sherman Tree stands 275 feet tall with a 103-foot circumference.
- The General Grant Tree stands 268 feet tall with a 108-foot circumference.

