

Photo shows big tree, but it's just a shade off

By SCOTT ALLMENDINGER
Courant Correspondent

EAST GRANBY — Only God can make a tree. Leave it to man to make the mistake.

East Granby's claim to fame, in the tree category anyway, is a huge black oak on Old Road that was supposedly pictured in a national calendar of big trees.

But man (or woman) somehow put the wrong photograph in the calendar. The pictured tree is not in East Granby. In fact, nobody knows exactly where it is.

Some East Granby residents, though, knew it was definitely not their beloved tree.

"I'm so embarrassed," said Debra Gangloff, vice president of program services for the American Forestry Association in Washington, which co-sponsors the National Register of Big Trees.

The photograph in the 1991 National Register of Big Trees calendar for October — listed as showing the Old Road black oak — enticed some residents to buy the publication and led them to believe the town had gained a recognition of sorts.

Gangloff said she is not sure where the pictured tree is located, but she does know that it also appeared in the 1988 calendar and was described as the co-champion of the species, another mistake.

She got in touch with the photographer, who checked his travel logs and realized that he took the shot of the misidentified tree in 1988, probably somewhere in Michigan. But the East Granby tree was not nominated until 1989, when Edward A. Richardson, a volunteer with the Connecticut Botanical Society, sent information about it to the American Forestry

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Sherry Peters / The Hartford Courant

■ John Kalafus of East Granby has notified the American Forestry Association that its national calendar, which intended to show this big black oak on Old Road, has the wrong tree pictured.

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Association.

The forestry association does not have a picture of the tree, Gangloff said.

The statistical information in the calendar is correct. It describes the East Granby tree, which is 84 feet tall with a crown spread of 95 feet. Next to the statistics is an 8-by-11-inch color photograph of an enormous tree, in which the sprawling branches stretch over two people raking.

John Kalafus, president of the East Granby Land Trust, ordered a copy of the calendar for \$2.35, as did John W. Shannahan, director of the Connecticut Historical Commission, who lives near Old Road.

Emilia Elander, 83, owns the property where the tree stands and has said that, to her, the tree is just a tree.

Kalafus thought it would be a nice gesture to present her with a copy of the calendar. He consulted with Shannahan, who is also a member of the land trust, only to be told that it is not the right tree.

"He knew it wasn't because he's been around town and seen it," Kalafus said.

Shannahan and a neighbor looked at their calendars, but could not figure out from what angle the photograph was taken. Then they realized it was not even the right tree.

Kalafus wrote a letter to the Davey Tree Experts Co. in Ohio, the company that co-sponsors the National Register of Big Trees, and asked for a retraction.

"They were right," Gangloff said. She added that the association would retract the mistake by printing a picture of the East Granby tree in next year's calendar.

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