DAS KLEINHIRN · PHOTO DOCUMENTATION

Mammoth Trees in Germany

A photographic survey from Langenhagen, Hanover, Magdeburg, Bad Salzdetfurth and Bremen

Sequoiadendron giganteum (Giant Sequoia)
Metasequoia glyptostroboides (Dawn Redwood)

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OVERVIEW

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INTRODUCTION

Two Species, One Family History

Mammoth trees rank among the most impressive conifers on Earth. Although their natural range lies in North America and China, numerous specimens have grown in German parks, gardens and avenues since the 19th and 20th centuries.

The reason lies in their remarkable adaptability to the temperate climate of Central Europe. In Germany, one mainly encounters two species: the Giant Sequoia (Sequoiadendron giganteum) and the Dawn Redwood (Metasequoia glyptostroboides).

The Giant Sequoia originates from the western slopes of the Sierra Nevada in California. It is evergreen, develops a thick, fire-resistant bark, and reaches heights of up to 95 metres in its native range. The Dawn Redwood, by contrast, was long thought extinct and known only from fossil finds – until it was rediscovered as a living species in 1941 in China's Hubei province. Unlike most conifers, it sheds its needles completely in autumn.

The following pages document five locations in northern Germany where both species can be seen: Langenhagen, Hanover, Magdeburg, Bad Salzdetfurth and Bremen. The documentation is supplemented by background on the naming of these trees as well as current figures from the nationwide mammoth-tree register.

AT A GLANCE

Giant Sequoia

Sequoiadendron giganteum · evergreen · scale-like needles · native to: Sierra Nevada (USA)

Dawn Redwood

Metasequoia glyptostroboides · deciduous · soft needles · native to: central China

Rediscovery

1941 in China's Hubei province, after the species had previously been known only as a fossil

Family

Cupressaceae (cypress family)

Data source

mbreg.de — more than 23,000 mapped mammoth trees in Germany

LOCATION 01 · LANGENHAGEN

Dawn Redwood in Brinker Park and Eichenpark

Metasequoia glyptostroboides

Several specimens of the Dawn Redwood stand in Brinker Park and in Eichenpark in Langenhagen.

The slender, cone-shaped trees can be recognised by their reddish-brown, fibrous bark and their soft needles arranged in opposite pairs. In spring and summer the trees display a vivid light green.

In autumn the needles turn golden yellow to orange before the tree — unusually for a conifer — sheds them completely. This shedding of foliage, together with its rapid growth, makes the Dawn Redwood a popular choice for urban green spaces.

Dawn Redwood (Metasequoia glyptostroboides), Brinker Park and Eichenpark, Langenhagen.

LOCATION 01 · LANGENHAGEN

Giant Sequoia at Lehmdamm

Sequoiadendron giganteum

A mature Giant Sequoia grows at Lehmdamm in Langenhagen.

Characteristic of this species is its thick, spongy-soft, fire-resistant bark, which protects the tree from wildfires in its North American homeland. Its scale-like, tightly overlapping needles differ markedly from the soft needles of the Dawn Redwood.

Giant Sequoias are among the most massive living organisms on Earth and can reach an age of several thousand years. Even as young trees they develop the straight, towering growth habit that makes the species so unmistakable.

Giant Sequoia (Sequoiadendron giganteum) and its characteristic bark, Lehmdamm, Langenhagen.

LOCATION 01 · LANGENHAGEN

Cones and Seeds of the Dawn Redwood

Metasequoia glyptostroboides

The small, oval cones of the Dawn Redwood open into individual segments when ripe, releasing their seeds.

Compared with the cones of the Giant Sequoia, those of the Dawn Redwood are noticeably smaller: when mature they reach a length of about 1.5 to 2.5 centimetres and hang from the branches on long, thin stalks. The individual cone scales are shield-shaped and open in a star-like pattern when ripe, as can be clearly seen in the close-up photographs.

Numerous small, winged seeds ripen inside the cones. Their narrow wing margins allow for dispersal by wind, although their range remains limited compared with lighter conifer seeds. The specimens shown were collected in Langenhagen and photographed next to a scale; a single cone therefore measures roughly the width of a thumbnail.

Opened cones and exposed seeds of the Dawn Redwood (Metasequoia glyptostroboides), Langenhagen.

LOCATION 02 · HANOVER

Giant Sequoia in Maschgarten

Sequoiadendron giganteum

Another Giant Sequoia stands in Maschgarten on Willy-Brandt-Allee in Hanover.

This inner-city green space shows that the species can also thrive under urban conditions — with compacted soils and limited root space.

The characteristic, slightly drooping growth of the outer branches as well as the grey-green, scale-like needles are clearly visible in the photographs. Within the park, the tree forms a distinct vertical accent.

Giant Sequoia (Sequoiadendron giganteum), Maschgarten, Willy-Brandt-Allee, Hanover.

LOCATION 03 · MAGDEBURG

Giant Sequoia in Magdeburg

Sequoiadendron giganteum

A well-developed Giant Sequoia can also be found in Magdeburg.

The photographs show the species' characteristic, cone-shaped habit: a straight, towering trunk with a comparatively narrow, densely foliaged crown.

The growth form remains strikingly symmetrical throughout the tree's entire life, making Giant Sequoias a popular eye-catcher in parks and public green spaces.

Giant Sequoia (Sequoiadendron giganteum), various views, Magdeburg.

LOCATION 04 · BAD SALZDETFURTH

Dawn Redwood in Bad Salzdetfurth

Metasequoia glyptostroboides

A Dawn Redwood with an especially delicate needle coat stands in Bad Salzdetfurth.

Compared directly with the Giant Sequoia, the soft, light green needles appear noticeably more delicate. They are flat, resemble those of the yew in arrangement, and are set in opposite pairs on thin, horizontally branching shoots.

This tree illustrates how the Dawn Redwood has become established even away from larger cities, in smaller municipalities — often as a solitary specimen in parks or cemetery grounds.

Dawn Redwood (Metasequoia glyptostroboides) and needle detail, Bad Salzdetfurth.

LOCATION 05 · BREMEN

Giant Sequoia in the Wallanlagen

Sequoiadendron giganteum

A Giant Sequoia with strikingly beautiful, reddish-brown bark grows in the Wallanlagen park in Bremen.

The deeply furrowed bark structure gives the trunk its characteristic appearance and, along with its impressive height, makes it a striking feature of this historic park.

The Wallanlagen are among the largest contiguous green spaces in Bremen's city centre and offer the tree ample room for its crown to develop freely.

Giant Sequoia (Sequoiadendron giganteum), bark and needles, Wallanlagen, Bremen.

BACKGROUND

The Names of the Mammoth Trees

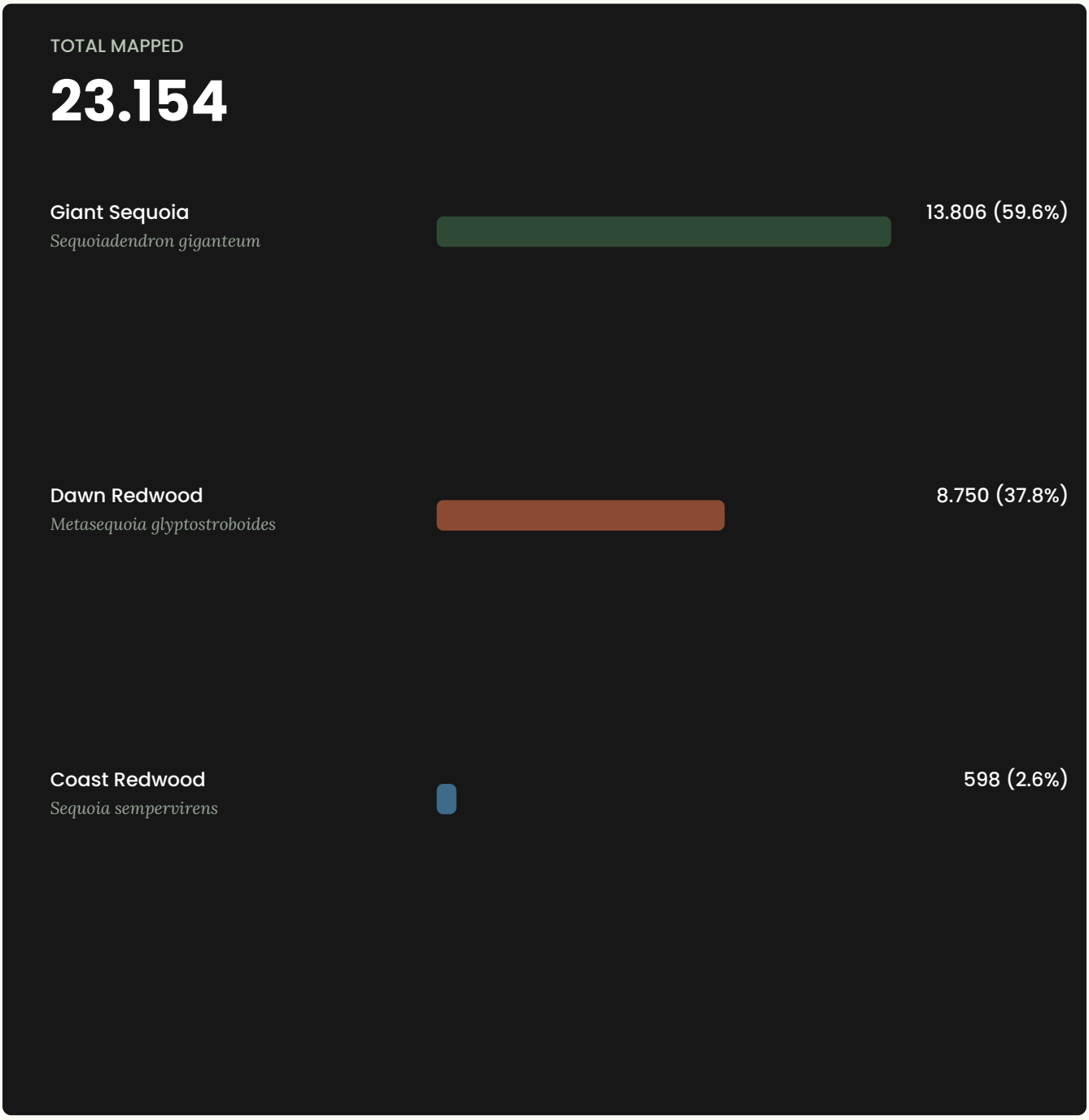
The scientific names of the mammoth trees tell the story of their discovery and study. The table below breaks down the botanical classification from plant family to species and explains the Greek and Latin word elements that make up these names.

Cupressaceae (family)	Latin cupressus (cypress) + -aceae	*"The cypress family"*
Sequoioideae (subfamily)	Sequoia + -oideae ("related to")	*"Related to Sequoia"*
Sequoia (genus)	named after Sequoyah (1767–1843), inventor of the Cherokee syllabary	*"In honour of Sequoyah"*
Sequoia sempervirens (species)	semper (always) + virens (green)	*"Ever-green Sequoia"*
Sequoiadendron (genus)	Sequoia + Greek dendron (tree)	*"Sequoia tree"*
Sequoiadendron giganteum (species)	Latin giganteus (giant)	*"The giant Sequoia tree"*
Metasequoia (genus)	Greek/Latin meta- (beyond) + Sequoia	*"Beyond Sequoia" (a "new" Sequoia)*
Metasequoia glyptostroboides (species)	glyptos (carved) + strobos (cone) + -oides (resembling)	*"Resembling a carved cone"*

DATA & FACTS

Distribution in Germany

How many mammoth trees actually stand in Germany can be stated fairly precisely thanks to volunteer mapping. The online register mbreg.de documents more than 23,000 locations nationwide, providing one of the most extensive datasets on this tree genus in Europe. The chart below shows the current distribution by species.



Source: mbreg.de. All figures are approximate and may vary depending on the current state of mapping.

IN CLOSING

Summary & Quiz

From Langenhagen to Bremen, one thing is clear: mammoth trees have become firmly established in the parks of northern Germany — as the evergreen Giant Sequoia with its fire-resistant bark, or as the deciduous Dawn Redwood with its soft needles. Test what you remember in the short quiz below. Mark the correct answer for each question.

QUESTION 1

Which of the two mammoth tree species sheds its needles completely in autumn?

- A Giant Sequoia (Sequoiadendron giganteum)
- B Dawn Redwood (Metasequoia glyptostroboides)
- C Both species shed their needles
- D Neither species

QUESTION 2

Where was the Dawn Redwood rediscovered as a living species in 1941, after having previously been known only as a fossil?

- A In California, USA
- B In the Sierra Nevada
- C In China's Hubei province
- D In Siberia

QUESTION 3

According to the mbreg.de register, roughly how many mammoth trees are currently mapped in Germany?

- A about 2,500
- B about 8,750
- C around 23,000
- D around 100,000

The answers can be found at the very end of this publication.

APPENDIX

Imprint & Photo Credits

This publication documents mammoth tree locations in Langenhagen, Hanover, Magdeburg, Bad Salzdetfurth and Bremen, and is based on the blog post “Mammutbaum (in Langenhagen, Hannover, Magdeburg, Bad Salzdetfurth, Bremen)”, published on 4 June 2026 at kleinhirn.eu.

The figures on the distribution of mammoth trees in Germany come from the volunteer-run register mbreg.de. All figures are approximate and provided without guarantee of completeness.

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Thank you for reading — enjoy discovering the mammoth trees of Germany for yourself.

QUIZ ANSWERS

Question 1: B · Question 2: C · Question 3: C