

# THE WONDROUS 3-D FULL-SPECTRUM LASER CLIMBOMETER

Humor By

Pamela Briggs

Since you had to ask, Bob, I'm glad to give you the specs for the 3-D Full-Spectrum Laser Climbometer. It's a wondrous instrument, and will make the joyous calling of tree measuring more pleasurable, exciting, and free of worry than you dared imagine!

## MEASUREMENT

The Climbometer automatically measures the height of trees and treelike shrubs with absolute accuracy—in feet (to the nearest thou), in meters (to the nearest micrometer), in bu (to the nearest hu), in ñir (to the nearest šusi)—or in any measurement system you specify. Choose from multiple language selections, and set the 3-DFSCLC to display the data, speak it, or both. It can also display in braille—handy for those furtive nighttime measurements on someone else's land.

It determines crown dimensions, trunk and branch circumference, overall volume, mass (both with and without birds' nests, eggs, bats, pupae, etc.), bark-to-heartwood ratio, thickness of cambium, chemical composition and anomalies, and a wealth of other quantifiable information. It includes a gas chromatograph. It records date, time, temperature, humidity, and barometric pressure. It can give an accurate count of leaves, buds, fruits, and seeds, should you really be into that kind of thing.

Naturally, these measurements vary not only with the seasons, but also with each day's changing climate. Therefore, although the 3-DFSCLC's measurement is accurate and indisputable, you will still have good reason to revisit your favorite trees anytime you wish—for additional readings on a particular date, say, or at a certain moon phase. It even detects minute fluctuations in tectonic plates and alerts seismologists if necessary.

## IDENTIFICATION

The Climbometer records each tree's GPS location and conventional geographical designation, and altitude/distance from mean sea level. It identifies the tree with its Latin name, common local names, and any honorary name you choose to give it. It displays its exact age, and projects its probable lifespan based on the tree's health, percentage and progression of disease and infestation, and the mood swings of the area's deer, bears, beavers, and other fauna. It can also calm and reassure bees, lure away mosquitoes, and placate dogs or other beasts who might be unhappy with your proximity to a particular tree.



*Editor's note: The manufacturer of the 3-DFSCLC has assured us that the device's laser has been toned down since an early calibration accident melted the aluminum radiator of a 1988 Chevy pick-up.*

The 3-DFSLC will, of course, lead you to (and from) a particular tree with its GPS capabilities. But it can also find a tree given the vaguest directions, including “past the old brick factory, then after the Motel 6 billboard, it’s about 5 miles beyond the silo.”

In its History Mode, it can read a tree’s rings, measure the storms and droughts it’s weathered, and give that tree’s biography, in narrative form or in columns of data. Also, when given any part of a tree—be it a fossilized impression of a leaf, a piece of paper, a hunk of amber, or a chest of drawers—it can identify the trees from which it came, and when and where.

### USES OF DATA

The 3-DFLSC can interpret the data in myriad ways. It keeps a running log so any tree’s measurements can be compared (to itself or to other trees). You can see average, mean, and median figures at a glance, and convert the information to a bar or pie graph in an instant. It can even show you which trees in what locations are related to one another.

The 3-DFLSC can convert data to music which can be downloaded to hardware, podcast, or printed out as a score. It can also convert data to colors and shapes. A new branch of tree science is possible wherein people will be able to identify a tree by hearing its song or viewing its artistic representation. Naturally, it can upload the data to personal computers and/or the Internet, and format it in a variety of existing data sets such as HTML tables and Excel files, while red-flagging any missing figures or anomalies.

The Climbometer can help you assess tree knowledge in other ways. It can catalog and label physical artifacts, such as leaves, bark, and samples of soil and DNA, and act as archivist at home, office, or on the road, fetching the samples on command.

### VISUAL RECORD

You want the visual gestalt? No problem! The Climbometer takes clear 3-D holograms of the tree, and displays them at any size you wish. You can delight your friends with a display of your finds right in your living room—so much more impressive than a video or slide show! You can use tree holograms to dress the set during theatrical performances (giving proper credit in the program, of course), and set and strike them instantly without taxing your stage crew. Or you can sleep underneath

the virtual branches of any tree you wish in your own bedroom.

### OTHER FEATURES

The 3-DFLSC is smooth, attractive, lightweight, scratchproof, shockproof, waterproof, and can withstand temperatures from absolute zero to the core of the sun. It floats, and contains binoculars, a magnifying glass, and an electron microscope. It also features a sturdy light bulb which can be used to examine the delicate veining of a leaf, or to signal a plane 30,000 feet above. Settings for its casing include Neon Mode (for winter) and Camouflage Mode (for those woodsy quiet times). It can be affixed to any surface, including bark and skin, without damage. It comes when you call it, and with patience can be taught to hover nearby.

Having unobtrusively collected weight data from you and your traveling companions, it can determine who can safely climb which trees, and which branches are best avoided, and give its recommendations with the utmost gentleness and discretion. In an emergency, it can contact the 911 service, relay vital medical information such as heart and respiration rates, and even perform simple first aid. It will track and retrieve lost members of your party, and can summon help with a piercing whistle. It can locate potable water, start a campfire, and brew a lovely willow bark tea.

It can diagnose various tree ills and suggest treatments. It can tell you where trees can best be planted or replanted, and their likelihood of survival. It’s useful with felled trees, too—it can evaluate the tree’s parts and suggest their best uses!

The Climbometer comes with a full complement of tree lore, mythology, recipes, medicinal, and spiritual uses, and has a LiveUpdate function to gather recently uncovered information. If you wish, as you and your party relax during mealtime, the 3-DFSLC will scamper around and interview the locals. It can coax oral history out of taciturn rural folk like you wouldn’t believe.

**But wait! There’s more!!** It can grade maple syrup before it’s even been produced. It can evaluate the coming fruit in the springtime. It can tell which trees will have the best colors in autumn, and map and narrate a fall foliage tour. If you haven’t guessed by now, the Climbometer’s uses are as broad and varied as your imagination.

**POWER SUPPLY AND CARE**

The 3-DFSCLC is solar-powered, and its energy augmented by the Earth's magnetic fields. Maintenance is simple, but vital to the performance of the instrument. It merely requires you to be pure of heart, to respect the natural world and its creatures, and thank each tree as you measure it.

The 3-DFSCLC doesn't need a user's manual. Its operation is automatic and intuitive. Just tell it what you need it to do (using one of four input methods, including voice). Also, it will explain any features you want to know about while giving foot, hand, and shoulder massages.

On the rare occasions it needs servicing, it will sense something's wrong before symptoms are apparent. It will inform you tactfully, gently wipe your tears, then tuck itself away into its original packing case and mail itself off to be repaired or replaced. Phone calls, e-mails, and/or handwritten notes describing its recuperation ease the pain of separation.

As for itself, it is not averse to a gentle kiss on its dome each night, and frankly, loves to be tucked in. Also, it's not a bad little conversationalist, and

appreciates being included in discussions.

If you need to lie to someone, be sure that the Climbometer is not nearby! The more lies you tell around it, the less accurate its information will be. (It is, however, designed to disregard news broadcasts.) If it does catch you in a lie, it may take long and heartfelt persuasion on your part to explain why the lie was necessary.

**TO SUM UP—**

It's the instrument of your dreams. The longer you use it, the more you won't know how you ever lived without it. Not available in stores.

February 7, 2006

*Pamela Briggs is an Iowa native and writer who has the remarkable good fortune to have only three degrees of separation from Kevin Bacon. Find out more about Pamela on her website:*

[www.pamelabriggs.com](http://www.pamelabriggs.com)

© 2006 Pamela Briggs.

**POETIC CONTRIBUTIONS AND DIGITAL RAMBLINGS**

Gnarly crowns abound  
Ancient ones in dark glens stand  
Mystery beckons  
John Knuerr, December 9, 2004

Please submit other poems, stories, anecdotes, digital pictures, etc. to the editor of the *Bulletin of the Eastern Native Tree Society*.

**BOOK REVIEWS AND NEW READINGS**

This section of the *Bulletin of the Eastern Native Tree Society* will be open to solicited and voluntary contributions from ENTS members regarding book or product reviews, or newly released publications that are of interest to ENTS membership. Please submit materials following the "Instructions for Contributors" to the editor of the *Bulletin of the Eastern Native Tree Society*. For unsolicited materials, the editor will determine if the material is appropriate for the readership.

**The editor of the *Bulletin* would like to ask ENTS membership to suggest additional features. Possibilities include a section on letters to the editor or correspondence with other groups/individuals outside of ENTS.**