

## Who is the Oldest in Rossmoor?

Local Rossmoor News Item Summarized by John Gilbert

Here is a candidate. It's not a person but a live tree and in this 21st century few residents know it exists. This tree known as the "Heritage Tree" sits peaceably next to a Ptarmigan Drive building. The exact age is unknown, but it was estimated to be over 100 years old in 1972.

Age however is not what gives it star status. It was recognized in 1972 as the largest "National Champion" buckeye Largest California Buckeye - *Aesculus californica* - on record with the American Forestry Association.

A Rossmoor resident (Dello T. Nixon) discovered it while on horseback riding into the undeveloped area - wow Ptarmigan Drive. Through his efforts Terra California in the early 1970's not only spared the tree, but also had turnbuckles and cables installed to keep it from splitting apart due to the great weight of its two main forks.

Measurements then in its branches arched 48 feet above the ground showed an average crown spread of 78 feet and its girth, three feet above the ground where it forks, measured 14 and one-half feet. The diameter of the largest fork was 38 inches, the other was 32 inches. You can see the steel wire cables holding many of the high branches in position, but it still survives.

A bronze plaque recounting above facts was erected below the tree as part of a dedication ceremony held during Rossmoor's Tenth Anniversary observance in 1974. That plaque has also aged since then.

Information extracted from the November 10, 1974 "Oakland Tribune," page 125.