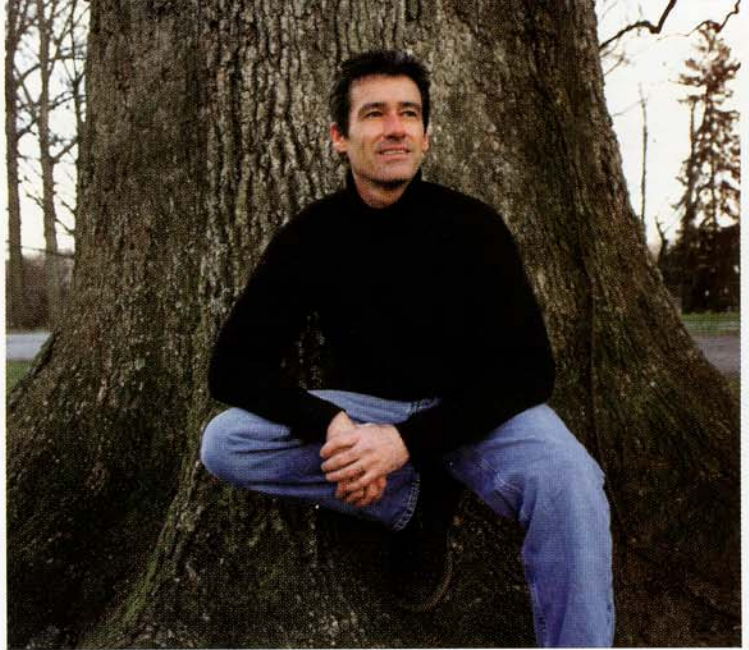


**WINTER** The majestic canopy of a mighty white oak (*Quercus alba*) is not only aesthetically appealing to Bill Duncan, but it also helped inspire his career. For Duncan, the fourth generation to live on the family's Centreville property, the tree bespeaks history, heritage, strength and stability.

Two hundred year-old oaks surrounded Duncan while growing up on the land that now houses his landscaping business. "My rope swing was on the biggest oak on the property," he says. "Even then I would look up at the trees and be in awe of them." It's fitting that Duncan's lifelong appreciation of the grand trees should lead him to eventually become president and owner of White Oak Landscape Management.

A slow grower that can reach 100 feet in height and width,



**William T. Duncan, President and Owner**  
White Oak Landscape Management, Centreville, DE  
White Oak (*Quercus alba*)

the white oak is a tree for the future. Because of this, Duncan rarely plants them on a client's property. "My niche in the business is ultra creative gardens," he says. "I use a lot of imagination to come up with exciting designs that my clients love."

Duncan's attention to detail and an unerring artistic eye allow him to design gardens that fit the customer's lifestyle; often, that lifestyle is a mobile one. "The vast majority of Americans plan on living in their houses for the short term," Duncan says. "They don't think of leaving their house to their children and it's those following generations who are going to appreciate a white oak — our children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and further."

A testament to its longevity, the tree routinely reaches impressive years. When the Wye Oak, the nation's largest white oak, was felled by a storm in Wye Mills, Maryland in 2002, it was estimated to be more than 460 years old. In nearby London Grove a white oak purported to be the largest in Pennsylvania stands on the grounds of the London Grove Friends Meeting. A brass plaque on the trunk reads in part, "1682 – 1932. This tree was living when William Penn came to America." Most recently, the National Arbor Day Federation declared the oak America's National Tree.

Duncan not only admires the white oak's rich history, its dramatic form captivates him. When sited in an open meadow, its formidable architecture demands attention. "Few trees have such a perfect shape and canopy," he says, adding that, to him, it is most beautiful in winter. "The shape, structure, and majesty are consistent throughout the year, but when you see the skeleton of the tree in winter, that's exciting."

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The slow-growing white oak (left) is a tree for the future. In winter, its majestic limbs display their elegant form. Photograph taken at London Grove Friends Meeting, where the famous white oak is purported to be the largest in Pennsylvania.

