



Branching out: Derek McIntosh wants to see how the Far North's trees measure up. Picture: JAKE NOWAKOWSKI

He's barking mad about big trees

THE hunt is on for the Far North's biggest trees.

Sydney man Derek McIntosh has created a national register of big trees and is in the Far North this week to sniff out the tallest, widest, biggest-crowned specimens of each native species to add to a rapidly-growing list that has piqued tree lovers' interest all over Australia.

And he wants Far Northerners to help him out.

Mr McIntosh has already spotted a sizeable raintree beside the Mossman sugar mill and a towering silverleaf paperbark outside Palm Cove's Sebel Reef House.

But he knows many others will be tucked away in less obvious places.

The long-time nature lover said curiosity got the better of him after stumbling on a

national biggest tree register in the US. "It's been going for 40 years and thousands of people have nominated big trees – it made me think we could do that same thing here," he said.

Height was not the only relevant factor.

"It's also about the tree's circumference and its crown spread," Mr McIntosh said.

"The raintree is 9m in circumference, 26m high and has a 41m crown and it will have an overall point score that differs from the silverleaf paperbark which is 28m high with a circumference of 8.5m and a 21m crown."

Tree lovers can log on to www.nationalregisterofbigtrees.com.au for advice on how to measure trees – without having to climb them – and how to register them.