

The world's oldest tree, known as 'Great-Grandfather', is 5,484 years old

Chilean scientists have identified a four-metre-thick Patagonian cypress known as the Great-Grandfather to be the world's oldest living tree, beating the current record-holder by over 600 years.



Image credit: Alerce Milenario

In a study of the coniferous tree, also known as Alerce Milenario in Spanish, Jonathan Barichivich, a Chilean scientist at the Climate and Environmental Sciences Laboratory in Paris, found that the tree could be as old as 5,484 years, at least 600 years older than the former contender. According to The Guardian, Maisa Rojas, Chile's environment minister and a member of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, called the news a "marvellous scientific discovery".

Known in Spanish as the alerce, Patagonian cypress (*Fitzroya cupressoides*) is a tree native to Chile and Argentina, belonging to the same family as giant redwoods.

Barichivich took a sample of the Great-Grandfather in 2020, but could not get to its core with the drill he used. He then used computer models to determine the age of the tree, taking into account environmental factors and random variations.

As he has not yet been able to fully count the year rings of the tree, Barichivich has not yet published an estimate of the age of the tree in a scientific journal, but as he has indicated, he is

