



Workday in Lanning Orchard with volunteers from Honda, photos courtesy Memorie Bailey FWLT

Redstone Arsenal planting in April



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*The Mission of the Alabama Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation: Restoring an American treasure to the forests of Alabama.*



**THE AMERICAN CHESTNUT FOUNDATION®**

*BackCrossTalk*

**Alabama Chapter newsletter**

**al-tacf.org**

*Spring, 2014*

*Chestnut Restoration – the environment, the future*

## Spring Workday

*There will be plenty of places for each of you to display your “talents”, and some new places. We are experimenting on showcasing our organization, so it will undoubtedly be fun if not rewarding. No matter your preconceptions, they will surely not materialize so come light in spirit. I need you there.*

*And as always many many thanks, Jack*

The traditional Spring Workday has this year slid it’s way into the Summer, and for many reason the old formula for what we hope to achieve has been vastly modified. What, I hope, we do not sacrifice in this reshuffling is the collegiality and good cheer that marks many occasions of the past.

**WHEN:** Saturday, June 7, 2014 9:00 am through Noon

**WHERE:** The TVA Orchard, Muscle Shoals, AL

**WHAT:** There will be multiple activities underway concurrently, and realistically there will be at least three levels of experience represented and participating at all times:

Some will be motivated to learn anything, and will attend because they are mildly interested and aren’t able to be on the beach in Florida.

Some will attend because local leadership in the Florence Sub-Chapter, in the person of Will Calhoun, encouraged them to follow up on his sidewalk introduction the night before at Florence’s First Friday. Will will be building membership on the streets of Florence with the cooperation of community leaders who advocated for our noble cause to be awarded official space. They will be invited to “work day” to scotch up their involvement and test their resolve.

Finally, the old dragoons from the TACF including any friends and interested acquaintances that are willing to do always, whatever it takes, whenever they are asked. You know who you are.

There is not a know-it-all in the group; and we all generously and naturally share, so this is what I’m counting on.

**SPECIFICS:** I need four “second lieutenants” for four teams to steward this educational event at the point of first contact, essentially to host a group through an orchard walk-through.

**MORE:** I envision this group to be first introduced to the Chapter through Don and Pat Nelson with The Learning Box serving as valuable introductory material.

Followed by the walk-through of the orchard, even as the dragoons busily go through the labors under the direction of Dr. Maddox, as per usual; in effect our orchard behavior becoming our best selling point.

**PREMISE:** We perform an activity that underscores our mission, and we should shout out our successes for all to witness.

In the words of Will Calhoun: “....there can be no failure in trying. We can’t go backwards...”

We have an opportunity because of the diminished pollination and bagging requirements, and the inoculations of a year ago etc. to run our traditional spring work day in this parallel fashion. Let’s just give it a try.

**REQUEST:** If you will PLEASE, please communicate your willingness to be one of my “Group Leaders” and I ask, as no one has ever asked before, that you communicate to me your intentions to attend, even if you plan on keeping yourself away from Agricola’s SideShow. RSVP...

**FINALLY:** At some remote shady spot under a tree, after the day’s wind-down has begun, we will have the 2Q BOD meeting even if guest are amongst us and a quorum is not.

## Message from the President

A theme for writing President's Remarks has subconsciously emerged, and is revealed in the process of focusing six months of activities. My mind just naturally structures time and events around profiles and personalities in recollection. This stems perhaps from Dr. Jim Maddox' statement to me that it is the people that motivates his chestnut compunction, NOT the science of the endeavor; as I would have presumed prior to my leadership role. So it is this moment when I share several reflections in review.

I invited Mr. Jim Green of Gadsden to assist at a recent work-day at Lanning Orchard( See article) because, in the mold of our recently departed Wylie Johnson, he sought me out when he learned of my enthusiasm for the restoration of chestnuts. He wants to contribute to their return. As a youthful ninety-plus year old and a trapper by vocation, and now by avocation, he understands first-hand the value of the tree to wildlife. Registering personally its loss in observations of nature and commercially in its bounty, he authenticates our efforts, while offering an important link to the youthful corp of volunteers gathered under the aegis of Honda Motors (HCA).

Individuals like Jim are the mortar which binds TACF together. Historically this has been true from the organization's inception. Take, for instance, the singular drive of one Chattanooga, William Raoul whose advocacy, beginning in the late seventies, tracks to the present in the person of Will Calhoun. This commitment-link is a fascinating narrative which descends the Tennessee Valley, past The Big Bend in the river to the western reaches of the state at Waterloo, Alabama. Linking the past with the present, the story revolves around a belief in the science of this restoration and volunteer acts of self-less sharing of talents and dollars. Unlike the river itself, this commitment-link flows backwards, returning towards its origins in the talents of Jeff Lingerfelt, a resident of Chattanooga and lifelong friend of Will's who shares his talents in visual communication graciously. He carried our new state logo, unveiled here in this issue, patiently through many iterations. And we proudly carry Jeff's membership on the Alabama roster. His efforts are here cited as an example of how each of us is impacted by the visionary early efforts of William Raoul and his devotion to the very notion that the chestnut will one day again reside in the forests of Alabama. Just as fascinating to track would be the vacillating channels of science between Dr. Hill Craddock of UTC who openly attests to Raoul's patronage and Dr. Jim Maddox of Alabama's quad-cities: back and forth, east to west, these Tennessee valley connections, all without departing from the narrative impact of just one individual; William Raoul. (A more in-depth article on Raoul's contributions to the restoration is envisioned for a feature story in the future.)

Every volunteer, performing every task, is endowed with this potential for outreach, so I challenge the readers of this newsletter to scrutinize closely the combined contributions of just one present day member for repetitive zeal in a game of "Where's Waldo?" What volunteer becomes the "mortar" here in this issue? Look no further than Edwin Camp. Note the incidence of his contributions and register, please, my sincere appreciation to him. In fact, my thanks to all you volunteers; your impact is manifold, and continues long after your actual service.

back row: Will Calhoun-Mac Phillippi-Pat Nelson-Don Nelson-BJ Johnson-Mary Shew-Dave Swinford; front row: Tim Chesnut-Tom Saiellii photo by Jack Agricola



Mac & John Manion planting some of our hybrid B3F3's chestnut trees @ Bham Botanical Gdns



March planting of TACF's Restoration Chestnuts 1.0 @ Jacksonville State University's Little River Canyon Center



Beth Maynard on stage behind Dr. Jimmy who is talking about the TVA Orchard @ the annual meeting



Edwin Camp (& David Morris) @ the blighted Talladega #2 tree collecting scionwood, Feb 2014

Director Emeritus David Morris and Chapter Treasurer Edwin Camp made a recent sojourn to visit the remains of our Talladega #2 tree in search of scion wood for grafting. You may recall, we lost our state champion tree several years back. Frankly, many believe that we loved the tree to death. Too many visitors. Too much pollen collecting. Clearcutting by USFS within 50 feet of the tree, and lastly, a planned burn which pretty much wiped out the inevitable stump sprouts. We danced our way through a forest of 6-foot high blackberry bushes [felt more like 12-feet] and new growth longleaf pines to reach the site. This tree had figured prominently in all our schemes to develop and restore an Alabama-oriented *Castanea dentata*. Its loss was a major blow, however, we have developed new sources of pollen with different genetics since. Unfortunately, the planned burn I mentioned earlier had wiped out all but 2 stump sprouts, so we will have to hold our breath to see if the old girl has enough energy left to start over yet again. So it is with chestnuts. Gathering scion wood, and pollen

as well, is a rewarding but somewhat risky business, given that we frequently have to cut our way into the tree site. Frequent visits by yellow jackets, wasps, fire ants and snakes [ask Marty Schulman about the Schulman Shuffle, developed at the Lanning research orchard on Chandler Mountain, when he ran headlong into a yellow jacket nest. It is part of the lore of the Chapter that he covered a mile in record time, helped along by the obliging jackets]. But we persevere, knowing that the key to our success is waiting out there somewhere. Some day we will find it.

-- Edwin Camp

### Become a Member Today

As a member of The American Chestnut Foundation, you will be part of an extraordinary journey that began in 1983 when a small group of prominent scientists established the premier organization dedicated to restoring the American chestnut.

As a member, you will receive the following:

- All TACF publications
- A special TACF car decal
- Membership in one of our state chapters: AL, CT, GA, IN, KY, MA, MD, ME, NC/SC, NY, OH, PA, TN, VA, VT/NH & WV
- Access to expert advice on growing and caring for American chestnut trees
- Opportunities to participate in local breeding and research activities
- And much, much more

TACF does not sell or otherwise disclose member information outside the organization and its chapters. This policy has no exceptions. We do not sell or exchange your information with any other organization, public, private, or non-profit.

## Join the Crusade

Invite others to become TACF members

I want to help restore the American Chestnut tree!

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chestnut Leaf (\$5,000+)    | <input type="checkbox"/> Bronze Leaf (\$250-\$499)                          |
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Please mail this form to: TACF  
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