

# THE GEORGIA SPROUT

Georgia Chapter  
of

The American Chestnut Foundation

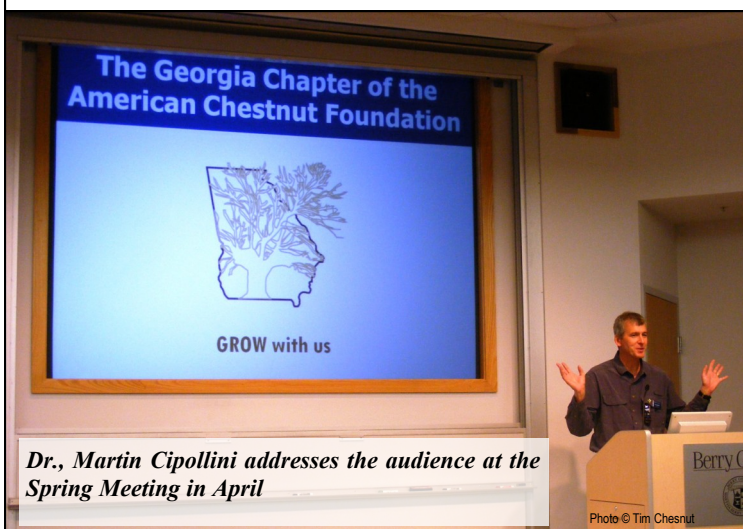
Spring, 2009

Volume 6, Issue 1

## SPRING MEETING SETS GOALS

—Tim Chesnut, Editor

**ITS SPRING IN GEORGIA!!!** and it is time again for the Georgia Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation to gear up and do our part to restore the American chestnut tree to the Appalachian forests!!!



*Dr., Martin Cipollini addresses the audience at the Spring Meeting in April*

Photo © Tim Chesnut

Back in late April, at our Chapter's Annual Spring meeting, our speakers, Dr. Martin Cipollini, Ronnie Camp, Taryn Kormanik and Dr. Scott Merkle, brought those in attendance up to speed with reports on our successes over the last year, ongoing research, and the challenges that lay ahead.

Dr. Cipollini reported on our pollination, nut-harvesting and orchard creation progress. Overall, we're not doing too badly—we have over 1200 trees planted in 36 "Orchards". Pollination and nut harvesting last season was successful, with less success experienced with our "in-state" pollination attempts as with our Meadowview trips.

Our work last year netted over 600 nuts from over 800 pollinated bags. We have some concerns over some pollen sources, but we believe our methods of collection, preparing, storing and application of the pollen is sound and correct. Now...we just need to find more living trees....from which we can collect more pollen...

...from which we can produce more nuts and therefore more family lines of trees (we currently have only one full line, are working on up to four more...but we're striving for 20)...AND we need more orchards in which to plant these lines and nuts.

That daunting to-do list has been passed to our new Pollination, Preservation and Harvesting Coordinator, Ronnie Camp.

Ronnie is a native Georgian and resides in Duluth with his wife, Barbara. He received both his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in electrical engineering from Georgia Tech, and works for Micromeritics Instrument Corporation managing and supervising the design of scientific instrumentation.

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## President's Message

By: Mike Hinson

Here we are again approaching another pollination season for the Georgia Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation! The 2008 pollination and harvest was our best yet. All of our nuts have been distributed and hopefully planted and sprouted by now. Our chapter continues to grow and evolve. We need every member to champion growing our membership by encouraging their friends and family to join and support our cause.

We have a new pollination and harvest coordinator in Ronnie Camp. Ronnie is replacing Dr. Martin Cipollini of Berry College who has done an outstanding job with the help of his interns in managing our pollinations and harvests as well as cataloging seed distribution, orchard documentation, and mother tree locations. Dr. Cipollini has put a lot of time and energy into setting us up to be successful as we move forward. Thank you Marty for a job very well done.

The best thing any of us can do for the chapter is to volunteer our time to help in the chapter activities. Ronnie Camp will be asking for volunteers to collect pollen, travel to Meadowview, VA to pre-bag, back to pollinate, and then back in the fall to harvest. We also need volunteers to constantly look for mother trees here in Georgia and follow up on leads in their area of the state.

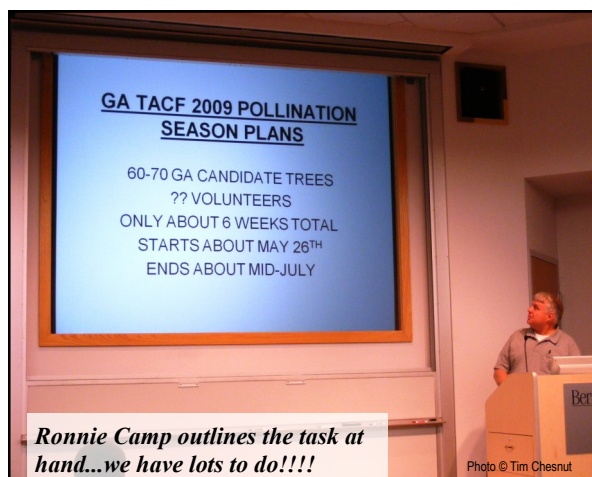
Together we can grow our chapter and accomplish our mission to restore the American Chestnut to the forests of Georgia. Check our website [www.gatacf.org](http://www.gatacf.org) often for opportunities. —Mike



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He is apparently fully aware of the scope and breadth of the job he now has in our Foundation, and hit the ground running: “we are still at the stage of finding out how many trees from each area will produce flowers this year. Once we know that, we can start choosing which lines to populate. Hopefully we’ll have enough choices to be able to choose for the greatest genetic variety”.

We are very fortunate to have Ronnie as our new Pollination Coordinator. Please contact him to welcome him and to volunteer to help him/us/the chestnut out!!!!



## Advice from a Tree

By Ilan Shamir

Stand Tall and Proud

Sink your roots deeply into the Earth

Reflect the light of a greater source

Think long term

Go out on a limb

Remember your place among all living beings

Embrace with joy the changing seasons

For each yields its own abundance

The Energy and Birth of Spring

The Growth and Contentment of Summer

The Wisdom to let go of leaves in the Fall

The Rest and Quiet Renewal of Winter

Feel the wind and the sun

And delight in their presence

Look up at the moon that shines down upon you

And the mystery of the stars at night.

Seek nourishment from the good things in life

Simple pleasures

Earth, fresh air, light

Be content with your natural beauty

Drink plenty of water

Let your limbs sway and dance in the breezes

Be flexible

Remember your roots

Enjoy the view!

**One Vision -  
One Voice -  
One Tree**

**Many hands -  
Many hours-  
One Tree**

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## Key to reviving Georgia's chestnut trees may lie in the past

By MARK DAVIS

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Wednesday, February 11, 2009

Nathan Klaus is tracking giants. They once hid in the forests of Fulton and Cobb counties. In Gwinnett, they found homes along ridges that hadn't been broken by plow and mule. The same was true in DeKalb, home to nearly 300 of the huge creatures.

But they're gone now, so Klaus relies on aged maps to trace those giants: American chestnut trees. It's a step in restoring the towering hardwoods to the landscape they once dominated.

"Chestnuts are one of those species that elicit ... a lot of emotion," said Klaus, a senior biologist with the state Department of Natural Resources. "As a scientist, I'm not supposed to have a lot of emotion [about chestnuts], but I do."

Klaus is so enthralled with them that he is creating a computer-enhanced map that shows where the big trees flourished across the state — and, he hopes, where *Castanea dentata* might thrive again.

The project, part of a \$12,000 grant, combines old maps with new technology. In 1805, the state began a series of lotteries to give settlers land that had been taken from Creek and Cherokee Indians. Surveyors' maps took note of rivers, lakes and other significant features to distinguish tracts. One of the most noteworthy sights in the forests: chestnut trees.

When Klaus saw the maps, he was curious. "The thing that kept popping up on the maps was chestnuts," said Klaus. "I said, 'I'd love to see where all those chestnuts were.'"

"The trees ranged from the mountains in a north-south diagonal, ending in Early County, according to lottery records. In the metro area, chestnuts were especially numerous in Fulton and Cobb counties.

Klaus and others have taken those maps and integrated them into a GIS, or Geographic Information System. A computer program, GIS can combine the historic distribution of the trees with maps of topography, climate, soil and other factors at a site. The result is a sophisticated analysis of a region. Through the GIS, Klaus compares these modern maps with the faded notations from surveyors who, two centuries ago, trod forests different than those we know today. The project should be finished this summer.

"Before planting, we'll need to know where to plant them," said Klaus.

The map highlights a tree that once loomed large on the American landscape.

Chestnut trees were hard to miss. A mature tree exceeded 100 feet in height and might be 8 feet in diameter. Their limbs were like those of a true giant — long, knotted and strong. A chestnut even figures in the opening line of "The Village Blacksmith" by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. (*speculation is that this was actually a horsechestnut tree — Ed.*)

They were part of the life cycle two centuries ago. Wild animals and settlers' hogs ate the nuts. Settlers prized the strong, smooth-grained wood for furniture.

But they could return. American chestnuts still sprout from the earth, usually around the stumps of giants that succumbed to the disease. They rarely live long; the blight still exists, and is fatal to most seedlings.

Yet some show signs of disease resistance, and that gives Michael Hinson hope.

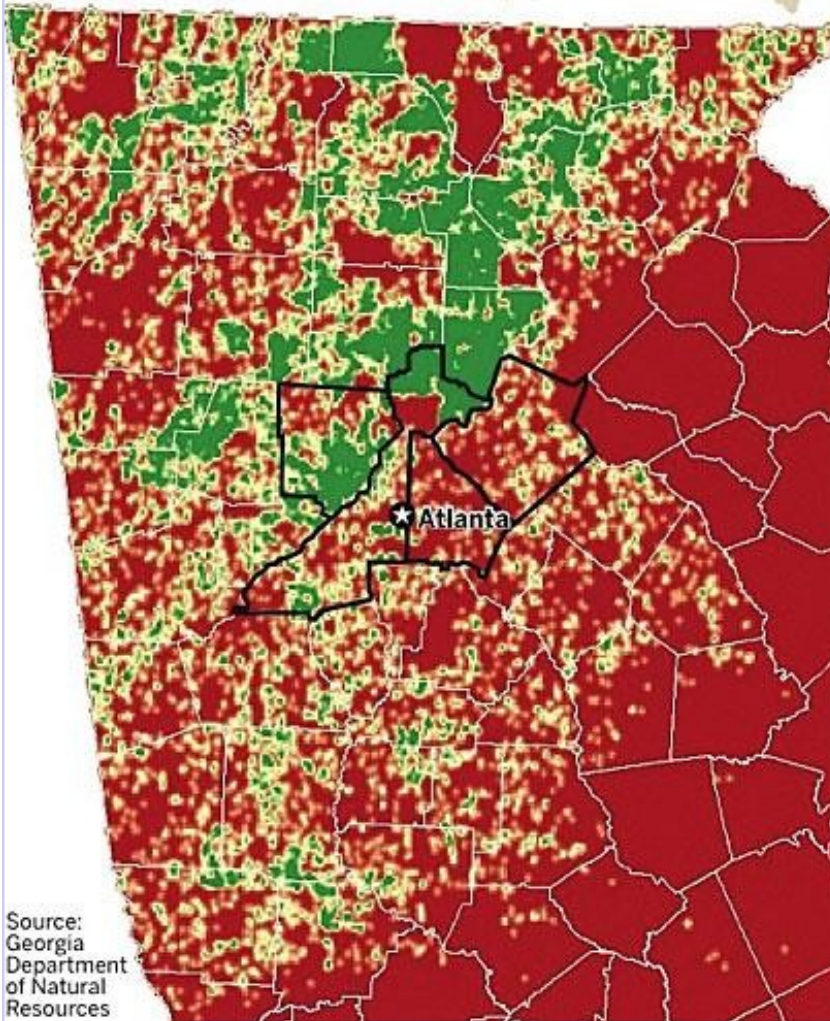
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### CHESTNUT TREES IN GEORGIA

More than 200 years ago, chestnut trees flourished across the state. A state biologist has compiled a map showing where they grew, hoping to re-establish the species in Georgia.

#### Chestnut trees level

- High density
- Medium density
- Low density or none



Source:  
Georgia  
Department  
of Natural  
Resources



## Groundbreaking In The Snow Held For New Chestnut Research Lab

By Debra McCown/Bristol Herald Courier  
Published: November 22, 2008

MEADOWVIEW, Va. — Snowfall and frigid winds failed to dampen Mary Belle Price's mission Friday. She'd traveled over the mountains to get here, a place where she and her husband lived, near a farm that bears his name — and at the site of a new \$500,000 research lab designed to help restore the American chestnut trees to Appalachian forests.

Price was among a handful of American Chestnut Foundation members and scientists who gathered at the foundation's farms Friday to celebrate the start of the lab's construction.

The foundation also is celebrating an agreement inked just three weeks ago with the U.S. Office of Surface Mining to plant chestnut trees on reclaimed mine sites.

Price, who now lives in Dalton, Ga., said she is fulfilling her husband's dying wish.

Growing up near White's Mill, Glenn C. Price told his wife he loved to camp on Clinch Mountain and collect chestnuts. After watching a blight destroy most of the trees in the first half of the 20th century, Price longed to help restore the iconic American tree. Before he died in 1994, he asked his wife to use his money for that purpose.

A year later, she bought and donated the 93 acres that became the foundation's second research farm here, the Glenn C. Price Research Farm — now home to several thousand trees that are crosses of American chestnut and Chinese chestnut trees.

On Friday, Mary Belle Price helped kick off the start of the new research lab for which she has provided much of the funding. Dozens of others from up and down the East Coast who also support the foundation's efforts joined her, as did the research scientists who work the farm.

"You need more than a farmhouse kitchen to do this work," said Fred Hebard, staff pathologist for the foundation, who has been working here — and doing science in a farmhouse kitchen — since the foundation's first research farm opened in 1989.

"We won't have a palatial place, but we will have a good building," he said. Hebard promised the new facility will have a bathroom — and will not be prone to snow blowing through the cracks in the wall as it was Friday in the barn where the group gathered before turning the first shovels of dirt.

"It'll let us take advantage of advances in genetics and molecular biology," Shawn Yarnes, a post-doctoral research associate, said of the new lab.

Southwest Virginia was once in the heart of the American chestnut's range, and the farms in Meadowview have been the center of the foundation's chestnut research since the nonprofit organization formed. The goal is to develop a chestnut tree that retains almost all the characteristics of the American chestnut but keeps the blight resistance of the Chinese chestnut.

The blight, a fungus from Asia, killed off the native chestnuts, and hit the region hard.

Phil Pritchard, former development director for the foundation, said the American chestnut was "the basic building material throughout the Appalachians."

"It was all the railroad ties, it was all the utility poles, it was all the fences that you saw. It was all the barns and most of the homes," Pritchard said.

When the blight took over, "people just stood around with open mouths and said, 'Wait a minute, this can't happen,' " he said.

But it did.

A quarter-century later, the foundation is seeing progress on three fronts: the new research facility; agreements with the federal surface mining office and forestry service; and reaching the point where blight-resistant nuts and seedlings will be ready for planting.

Bob Paris, a foundation research geneticist, said Friday that surface coal mine sites should play an important role in the tree's re-introduction to the forest. About 5,000 trees have already been planted on reclaimed mining sites using a \$200,000 federal grant, he said.

"That will give us an idea how resistance might hold up on a regional basis as well as how a chestnut tree might perform on a site such as a mine site," Paris said.

*Fred Hebard, Mary Belle Price, and Marshal Case breaking ground for the new TACF Lab in Meadowview*



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Test plantings will begin in the spring at clear-cut sites on national forest land to see how the chestnut seedlings developed here will hold up in the forest – and how resistant they will be to the blight there.

And then there are the legacy trees, about 200 of them, expected to produce the nuts that will begin serious reforestation efforts.

“They’re ready,” Hebard said of the first trees, “but we still have a lot of work to do.”

Genetically speaking, the legacy trees are about 94 percent American chestnut – and, researchers believe, 100% resistant to the blight.

Marshal Case, the foundation’s president who came from Vermont for the ground breaking Friday, said the foundation’s effort to partner with the mining and timber industries represents “the perfect match” for restoring the American chestnut.

Coal mining companies, which must reclaim large amounts of land, can use chestnut trees in reclamation, Case said. Meanwhile, the foundation can plant trees where they can grow without competition from other species.

Timber companies also are investing in the project, Case said, because they see long-term benefits to their industry from a product no one else has: a durable, fast-growing hardwood that is light and easy to work with.

“This is going to put a good cash flow into the economy with the value of the trees in many ways. We’re going to help with that and because the trees sequester carbon ... we’re going to help with air quality,” Case said. “Small landowners, when we have this material get back into their hands, that will help the person’s situation, and there are a lot of people out there who could use that kind of a boost.”

Case said a chestnut tree will be planted Dec. 11 on Governors Island in New York Harbor as a symbol of a United Nations initiative to plant seven billion trees worldwide to offset the effects of carbon pollution.

Economic benefits could start to be realized in as soon as a decade, Case said.

Hebard said large-scale economic impacts of the American chestnut’s return will be seen in 50 to 100 years.

“Everybody needs to get their children and grandchildren involved in this because they’re the ones that are going to benefit from it,” said Dianne Smith, a founding member of the foundation’s Georgia chapter who traveled here for the ground breaking. “They’ll be able to build houses and barns and fence posts with rot-resistant wood.”

***WE LOVE YOU MARY BELLE!!!-Ed.***



—continued from page 3—

Hinson is president of the Georgia chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to restoring the big tree to its native range. A Rome resident, he became interested in them when a co-worker invited him to tramp the mountains, looking for chestnut trees. He’s never seen one of the giants, “but I’d sure like to.”

Hinson and others chapter members have participated in cross-breeding hardy American chestnut specimens with blight-resistant Chinese chestnut trees, creating 50-50 hybrids. Those that resist the blight are “backcross-bred” with another American chestnut, creating specimen that are 75 percent American chestnut. If that tree thrives, the process is repeated, with successive generations featuring more genetic material from the American species. The final specimens are 15/16 American chestnut.

The national chestnut organization has hundreds of backcross-bred trees at a research facility in Virginia. It hopes to plant some in national forests if they prove blight-resistant. Trees also are planted at Berry College and at a UGA facility in Blairsville, where scientists are watching them for signs of beating the disease.

In time, said Hinson, some of the trees may grow in national forests here. “It’d be neat,” said Hinson, who operates a saw mill that specializes in cutting southern yellow pine for construction. “I’m not sure I’ll be around to see it.”

A few mature trees exist in Georgia. In 2006, Klaus discovered a stand of chestnuts near a hiking trail not far from President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Little White House at Warm Springs. The largest tree hardly rivaled those of the past — it was about 40 feet tall — but it was big enough to touch off huge excitement among chestnut fanciers.

Martin Cipollini, a biology professor at Berry College, shared that excitement. Cipollini, who has helped oversee the planting project at Berry, wants to see the trees replanted in the forests they once dominated. “It’s a long-term project,” he said. “We all recognize that this is for the benefit of future generations.”

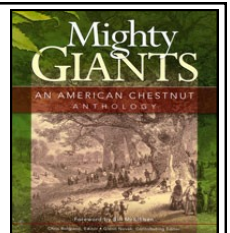
A future that relies on past discoveries, when giants still ruled the forests.

***"This majestic and useful tree...no other tree received such respect."***

—Jimmy Carter—(an excerpt from *Mighty Giants*)

Join us in our effort to restore the King of the Appalachian Trees to the Throne of the Forest!! Fill out the card to the left and send it to our National Address.

You too can become a part of an ecological success story that is the Restoration of the American Chestnut!!







## Georgia First Chapter to Sponsor a Legacy Tree

*Finally, here's what we've been waiting for, our first seed orchard!!*

It began with a dream – that the American chestnut could be restored to our nation's forest. Now that dream is taking root in The American Chestnut Foundation's (TACF) first Legacy Tree seed orchard. The Georgia Chapter members proved their dedication to the restoration efforts by being the first to sponsor a Legacy Tree during TACF's 25th Anniversary year celebration.

At our research farms in Meadowview, Virginia this fall Dr. Fred Hebard, TACF's lead scientist, selected the first 200 most blight-resistant 4 year old candidate trees from over 30,000 seeds. These special trees are the sixth generation of research work, the result of 25 years of backcross breeding. They are approximately 15/16 American chestnut and 1/16 Chinese chestnut. In a few years, seeds from this legacy tree orchard will be planted throughout the former chestnut range.

Now that our state chapter has reached its goal a plaque will be made that will note the Georgia Chapter and "Group Sponsored Tree". All nut distribution from this tree will be sole responsibility of the chapter's officers.

Many thanks to our contributors: Mary Belle Price, Ronnie Camp, Tim, Abigail and Lillian Chesnut, Martin Cipollini, Don Davis, Carolyn Hill, Mike Hinson, Ken McDonald, Tom Pachinger, Jerry and Diane Smith, and Mark Stoakes.

### *Random Pictures from the Chapter*



*Above: Participants of the April meeting tour the Berry Backcross Orchard*



*Above Right: Fred Hebard speaks, and two VP's, Tim Chesnut (GA) and Martin Schulman (AL) listen.*

*Right: the view from the millhouse at Ashland Farms, where the "Chestnut Feast" was held! Both taken last October during the Chestnut Foundation Convention*

Submit your pictures, stories and any other contributions for the Sprout to [Tim@ChestnutForestry.com](mailto:Tim@ChestnutForestry.com)



*Photo © Tim Chesnut*





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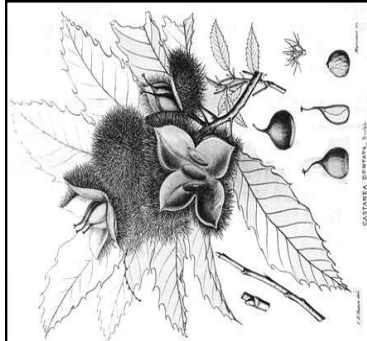
Board Member

**Joe Nicholson**

Board Member

**Mary Belle Price**

Honorary Board Member



**UPCOMING EVENTS and ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

**POLLINATION/COLLECTION OF POLLEN  
FROM GEORGIA TREES, PRE-BAGGING AND  
POLLINATION OF MEADOWVIEW TREES**

PLEASE MAKE YOURSELF AVAILABLE TO ASSIST WITH THESE EVENTS...INDEED, THEY ARE THE CRUX OF WHAT WE DO ! VOLUNTEERS WILL BE NEEDED FROM NOW UNTIL MID-JULY FOR POLLINATION, AND THEN AGAIN IN THE FALL FOR NUT-HARVESTING. PLEASE CALL **RONNIE CAMP** AT **770+476-5382**, OR EMAIL HIM AT **Ronnie.Camp@micromeritics.com** PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE CONTACT HIM!!!

**CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS**

We constantly need volunteers to help us present our story and our cause at fairs, festivals, shindigs, garden club meetings, landowner meetings, etc. Of course, we need to know about those fairs, festivals and shindigs far in advance!!!

Please help us organize our efforts to participate in as many of these events, as well as plan meetings, speaking and sponsorship opportunities, radio shows, etc. PLEASE CONTACT Tim Chesnut at 706+936-0699 or email me at Tim@ChesnutForestry.com with any information. **YOUR GEOR-**

**With board approval TACF** has hired a new president and CEO to replace Marshall Case who has retired. His name is Bryan Burhans and he comes from the National Wild Turkey Federation. Our new national office in Ashville is open. Bryan started February 1<sup>st</sup> at the new office. We are excited about his energy and skill sets. Marshall will be retained in a consulting capacity to work with Bryan . Bryan can be reached at [bryan@acf.org](mailto:bryan@acf.org) .

**FIND A TREE?** Go to our website, [www.GaTACF.org](http://www.GaTACF.org) and click on the "how can I help" tab. There you will find detailed instructions on how to identify a tree, phone numbers of who to call, and how to submit a sample for verification. You can also call a board member to help out!

***GIA CHAPTER WAS THE FIRST CHAPTER TO PURCHASE THEIR OWN LEGACY TREE!!!! WE ARE VERY PROUD TO HAVE DONE SO AND LOOK FORWARD TO PRESERVING, PROTECTING AND BEING WISE STEWARDS OF OUR TREE!!! Go to [http://acf.org/Legacy\\_Tree.php](http://acf.org/Legacy_Tree.php) to learn more about the Legacy Tree Program!***

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**WWW.TACF.ORG**

The Georgia Sprout is a publication of the Georgia Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation.

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Hard Copies Published by  
Fast Printing and Copies  
1019 Broad St NE.  
Rome, GA 30161

**OUR ACTIVITIES:**

*Primary activities of your Georgia Chapter of TACF:*

- Finding and identifying surviving trees
- Pollinating them
- Harvesting nuts
- Planting American Chestnut Trees throughout the state of Georgia
- Identifying potential sites for breeding orchards within the state.
- Preserving local genetics
- Breeding blight resistant and regionally adapted trees
- Public outreach and education
- Organizing members and volunteers in those activities.

**PLEASE VOLUNTEER!!! CONTACT US!!!!**





**Georgia Chapter  
The American Chestnut  
Foundation**

15 Bluff Mountain Drive  
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(706) 234-6698  
**WWW.GaTACF.ORG**

**Membership Application  
The American Chestnut Foundation, Georgia Chapter**

Enclosed is my TACF  
membership support of:

- ☐ Chestnut Leaf, \$5,000  
☐ Gold Leaf, \$1,000  
☐ Silver Leaf, \$500  
☐ Bronze Leaf, \$250  
☐ Green Leaf, \$100  
☐ Regular, \$40  
☐ Student, \$15  
☐ Special Gift to State

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ This is a gift membership from: \_\_\_\_\_  
address: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Check Enclosed (Make payable to The American Chestnut Foundation)

☐ Credit Card please check: ☐ VISA ☐ MC #: \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Billing Address for Credit Card if different from above:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name on Card (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

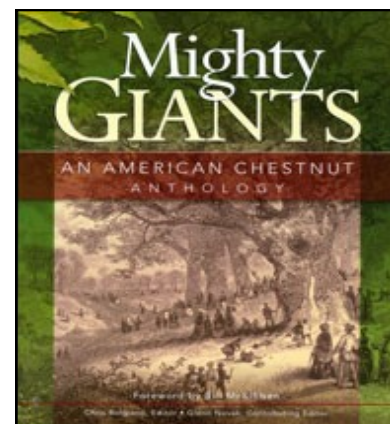
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed : \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Membership includes subscriptions to *The Georgia Sprout*  
*The Journal of The American Chestnut Foundation*, *The Bark*  
and enrollment in the Georgia Chapter of TACF

Please make check payable to:  
The American Chestnut Foundation  
P.O. Box 4044, Bennington, VT 05201-4044.

TACF is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit membership organization.  
Except for the member services portion of your contribution (valued at \$15), your gift is tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law.



**[www.ACF.org](http://www.ACF.org) to order!!!!**

