



Chapter Officers:

Ms. Essie Burnworth, President
Mr. Harold F. Burnworth, Vice-President
Ms. Barbara B. Knapp, Secretary
Mr. Tom Traver, Treasurer

Directors:

Dr. Douglas H. Boucher
Dr. Gary P. Carver
Dr. James S. Coleman
Mr. Stephen Dodge
Mr. Paul Eriksson
Ms. Betty Garrard
Mr. James Hill
Mr. Ron Kuipers
Ms. Kathleen Marmet
Mr. Robert Strasser
Mr. Richard S. Will
Mr. Bradley Yohe

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The Maryland Chapter supports the efforts of The American Chestnut Foundation to restore the American chestnut tree, identifies and preserves American chestnut survivors in Maryland and promotes educational and scientific research efforts directed at restoring American chestnut trees in Maryland.

The Nominations Committee recommendations for Chapter Officers were adopted by voice vote at the Annual Meeting October 7th. New Officers as of November 1 are President, Kathy Marmet, Vice President, Robert Strasser and Treasurer Emilie Crown.

Chestnut Returns to Mount Vernon

Maryland Chapter officers and board members joined with TACF and other dignitaries as the Association of Consulting Foresters hosted a chestnut tree dedication ceremony on the grounds of Mount Vernon October 13th. References to "common chestnuts" in George Washington's journal document the presence of American chestnut trees at Mount Vernon during our first President's lifetime. TACF provided the ceremonial tree from its Meadowview, Virginia, Research Farms.

Maryland Chapter

Newsletter – October 2006



The Maryland Chapter honored the Burnworth team--President Essie and Vice President Burnie for their outstanding leadership with a carving of a flicker done by Gary Carver using wood from one of the Sugarloaf Mountain trees.



Science panelists, (l to r) Dr. Donald Nuss of the University of Maryland Biotechnology Institute, Dr. Doug Boucher (moderator) of Hood College and Dr. Paul Sisco, TACF Southern Regional Coordinator share a laugh.

Annual Meeting and Chestnut Genetic Science Fill Marx Center at Hood College

Maryland Chapter members searched for more chairs to seat at least fifty-five people gathered for the Chapter Annual Meeting and science presentations by Drs. Paul Sisco and Donald Nuss.

Dr. Sisco described a project funded by the National Science Foundation in which TACF is partnering with several academic institutions. The project involves basic research in using advanced genetic mapping techniques with chestnut and related tree species, including oak. Although the research focus is on advancement of the mapping technology, rather than saving the American chestnut, Dr. Sisco anticipates that it may yield important insights into the genetic basis of blight resistance with potential for improving the current backcross breeding process and leading to new approaches to American chestnut restoration.

Dr. Nuss described his project, also basic genetic research, funded by the National Institutes of Health. His work, which is expected to yield insights applicable to other disease organisms, focuses on the relationship between three organisms—the chestnut tree, the chestnut blight—a fungus, and hypovirus—a virus that infects the chestnut blight fungus. There are different types of both the blight fungus and the hypovirus. Some hypovirus kill the host blight, while others merely weaken it. Different compatibility types of blight prevent the spreading of hypovirus from one blight organism to another. Infection of blight by hypovirus can result in survival of blight-infected chestnut trees if the virus is spread widely among the different blight organisms. Dr. Nuss's current project involves genetic mapping of the chestnut blight fungus. Genetic mapping of the relatively small hypovirus has been the focus of other research.

The panel discussion moderated by Dr. Boucher focused on some of the commonalities and connections between the two projects. Both are basic (as opposed to applied) science research using a comparative genetics approach with multiple organisms. Dr. Boucher's questions helped non-scientist attendees to better understand some of the potential practical implications of this basic research to the American chestnut Restoration effort.

IS THIS YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER?

DON'T MISS OUT ON THE FUN!

The Maryland Chapter has been mailing all meeting notices and newsletters to everyone who has indicated an interest by giving us a name and address. We hoped your interest would lead you to support our efforts by joining TACF, which includes state chapter membership. Our increasing need for resources for backcross breeding orchards has lead us to conclude that we can no longer justify the cost of postage for non-member mailings. We will continue to send information by email to anyone who provides us with an email address. We plan to establish a list-serve, which will permit people to add, delete or change their email address for receiving Chapter communications--soon. For now, send any changes or additions to publications@mdtacf.com

PLEASE JOIN TACF

ThorpeWood and The Maryland Chapter of The American Chestnut Foundation
proudly present

The First Annual American Chestnut Restoration Feast

At the ThorpeWood Lodge
November 10, 2006
6 pm – 10 pm

EVENT REGISTRATION FORM

Send Payment and Registration to ThorpeWood, 12805-A Mink Farm Road
Thurmont, MD 21788-1402
Fax (301) 271-2060

Name _____

Street Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Email Address _____

Phone _____

IMPORTANT – NUMBER OF VEGETARIAN ENTREES FOR YOUR PARTY

Number Registering @ \$50 per person* _____ X \$50 = \$ _____

Total Amount of Registration Donation Enclosed** \$ _____

Total Amount of Registration Donation Paid Through
ThorpeWood PayPal Link*** \$ _____

*This event is limited to the first 70 people who pay for their registrations. Any additional registration payments will be promptly returned. Registration will close Monday, November 6, 2006.

**Please pay by check payable to ThorpeWood or through PayPal link at www.thorpewood.org (links in lower right corner of home page)

***If name, address and email on PayPal payment do not match information above, please provide the PayPal contact information on reverse so that we can match your payment to this form.

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE SUPPORT WELCOMED

Proceeds of the First Annual American Chestnut Restoration Feast will help fund the Hood College American Chestnut Research Associate Position, which has made Robert Strasser's skills and knowledge available for Maryland Chapter chestnut breeding and education efforts. Hood College has provided office space, computer services and administrative support, while private donations have funded part-time salary and expenses. Our goal for the future is to identify renewable funding for a full-time position to support the growing backcross breeding program and educational outreach. Contributions for this purpose should be made out to the Hood College Chestnut Tree Project:100-485 and sent to the Maryland Chapter TACF at the address on the front of this newsletter. Hood College, TACF, MDTACF and ThorpeWood are all 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations.

Bumper Crop of Backcross Seed and Strong Seedling Survival Expand Need for Orchard Space And Maintenance Resources

In September, the Maryland Chapter harvested 2721 seed nuts resulting from controlled pollination carried out in June of this year. There is sufficient seed for spring planting of ten of the eleven attempted backcross lines. In addition, 1100 open pollinated American nuts were harvested and processed for spring planting. 2776 Chinese nuts were also harvested. Most of the 2706 Chinese nuts harvested by the Burnworths from their trees were donated for use in the First Annual American Chestnut Restoration Feast. American and Chinese nuts are planted as controls in backcross orchards. American nuts are also planted to preserve genetic diversity and for education.

Backcross seedling survival results were also excellent this year, ranging from 65% to 100%, with survival of several lines exceeding 90%. With more than a thousand trees growing orchards, and so much seed available to plant, the search is on for orchard space—coupled with arrangements for care and protection from deer that are necessary to successful chestnut growing.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO HELP?

These are exciting times at MDTACF. We are amazed at our own successes in orchard seedling survival and backcross seed production. Great challenge comes with these successes—the need for more orchard space to plant the new backcross lines, which means more resources for deer protection and maintenance, which in turn means more contributors and volunteers will be needed to sustain our progress toward the ultimate goal of restoring the American chestnut tree to its place in the forest. If you love the trees, there's a place in the Maryland Chapter organization calling out for your talents. Please let us know your interests and passions regarding the American chestnut. Email publications@mdtacf.com or call one of the numbers on the web site.