



Maryland Chapter

Newsletter – September 2010

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John Cordts, Vice-President
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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.

Harvest is Coming Soon

Chestnuts will be ready to harvest between mid-September and early October. If anyone wants to help collect and process them for winter storage, please call Essie Burnworth at (301) 762-6715 or Ron Kuipers at (301) 942-6543.

Check out the MDTACF web site at www.mdtacf.org

MDTACF Annual Meeting Speaker Discusses Practical Application of Basic Research with Potential to Reduce Virulence of Chestnut Blight Fungus

Featured speaker Dr. Donald Nuss, Professor and Director, University of Maryland Institute of Bioscience and Biotechnology Research will present “Putting the Chestnut Blight Fungus Genome Sequence To Work” at the MDTACF Annual Meeting Saturday, October 9th.



Be sure to save the meeting announcement flyer enclosed with this newsletter for meeting time, location and directions.

Dr. Nuss is no stranger to practical applications of his basic research on *Cryphonectria parasitica* and the hypovirus that can weaken it. Beginning several years ago, he has assisted with hypovirus treatment of Barbara Knapp’s large survivor tree, and, along with Dr. Bill MacDonald of WVU, has provided cultures for use in growing Essie Burnworth’s hypovirulent “soup” that has been used to treat many Maryland trees.

Dr. Nuss will discuss results of research funded by the U.S. Department of Energy Joint Genome Institute that has sequenced the genome of the chestnut blight fungus *Cryphonectria parasitica*. His talk will focus on one practical research application of this genome sequence that, with a variety of previously generated genetic tools, may enable scientists to begin identifying the fungal genes that regulate the spread of viruses that attenuate virulence of the chestnut blight fungus (hypovirulence).

New Signs Go Up At MDTACF Orchards

The Maryland chapter is making progress in placing signs at our most publically accessible orchards. We now have large signs identifying the



orchards at Izaak Walton Rockville, Monocacy, WSSC, Ft Detrick and Black Hill Park. Smaller signs that identify and describe individual rows of trees have been installed in the Black Hill and Ft Detrick orchards. Above from l to r with new sign at Ft. Detrick orchard: Gene Hillegas, Ron Clements, Ron Kuipers, Gary Carver.

Remembering Jim Hill

At the May 1 spring MDTACF meeting President Gary Carver invited anyone to speak about their memories of Jim Hill. Several members shared special memories of Jim's love of the American chestnut and dedication to the work of the Maryland Chapter.



Ron Clements (above) brought the handsome leaf that he has carved in memory of Jim that hangs on the Fox Haven Orchard gate. Dottie Hill, Jim's wife, was there, and Ron presented her with a small replica leaf.

Jim was a founding member of the MDTACF Board and a dependable contributor to the work of the Chapter. He was there to help with the first planting of the 3 acre Fox Haven orchard in the spring of 2003, and in recent years had served as orchard steward for this largest of Maryland's orchards.



As orchard steward, Jim not only drove the tractor to mow between the now sizeable trees, but also made repairs to keep the ageing tractor going and safe for use in the orchard. Jim took delight in this work and was often seen

An Opportunity – Attend the TACF Annual Meeting in Shepherdstown, WV - October 15-17

TACF's Annual Meeting will be close enough for a day trip for many Maryland Chapter members and friends of the American chestnut. This is an opportunity to hear some terrific speakers and to meet some of the wonderful people on the staff and from other chapters who make TACF such a great organization.

Links to register online or view the full event brochure are at www.mdtaf.org Full registration (without lodging) is only \$75 for TACF members, and day passes (not including meals) are only \$40 for members on Saturday, and \$25 on Sunday.

MD TACF Nominations for 2010-2011

Kathy Marmet, Chair of the Nominating Committee, has submitted the following slate for officers and Board members. Elections will be held at the Annual Meeting on October 3 at which time additional nominations may be made from the floor.

Officers:

President	Gary Carver
Vice President	John Cordts
Secretary	Barbara Knapp
Treasurer	Emilie Crown

Incumbent Board members for three-year terms:

Dr. Douglas Boucher
Dr. Katia Engelhardt
Stephen Peck
Robert Strasser

New Board members and terms.

Two years	John Bradfield
Three Years	Ron Clements
Three Years	James Curtis
Three Years	Tom Scrivener
Three Years	Steven Haggblade

grinning from ear to ear as he drove down the rows cutting the tall grass and weeds. Photos at right and left were taken of Jim in May of 2009. His dedication, good humor and distinctive personality will be long remembered and are much missed.



A message from the new Web Site Manager Jim Curtis

Early this year, with some help and encouragement from Gary Carver and Kathy Marmet, I was pleased to begin managing our web site (www.mdtacf.org). As the new web site manager, my main task has been to keep the site updated with the latest news and events. However, as I became familiar our site's design and organization, I felt that some re-design and simplification was in order. With Dr. Carver's assistance, I made some slight changes in the home page menu and combined several of the existing pages. Also, I added a photo to the home page and created a new photo gallery page.

My future efforts will consist largely of routine updates, but I also hope to expand the photo gallery, reorganize and update the orchard information, update the site's coding, and to generally improve the site.

To expand the photo gallery I will need the assistance of the members. I'm asking our members to submit photos of our Chapter's activities and any chestnut related photos to me at curtisjim@comcast.net. Photos of individuals should include appropriate identifications and, more importantly, include permission from those individuals to use their images on our web site.

Also, if you have any questions, comments or suggestions concerning our web site, www.mdtacf.org, please feel free to send them to me at curtisjim@comcast.net.

**View this newsletter in color
at www.mdtacf.org**



Meet Katy McCune New Mid-Atlantic Science Coordinator Serves MD Chapter

TACF's new Regional Science Coordinator, Catherine (Katy) McCune (above) now serves the MD, WV and VA state chapters.

Born in the Appalachian Mountains, Katy is excited to be working in the area she calls home.

With a dual degree in Environmental Studies and Sociology from Tufts University, Katy's previous work experiences have taken her to Patagonia, Argentina, where she provided onsite planning, implementation and management of logistics and science for a British expedition company, to California, where she worked at a raptor rehabilitation center and was a rearing specialist for California condors in Big Sur and Pinnacles National Monument, and to the New England Bay Aquarium.

More recently, Katy has worked as a cartographer and GIS editor for the Virginia Department of Forestry, where she helped pilot a conservation project for the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Since March, 2010, Katy has worked as a summer intern with the Virginia chapter of TACF, where she

helped pollinate some large surviving American chestnut trees like the one shown below with Katy and Wayne Bowman of the VA Department of Forestry and member of the VA Chapter Board.



As TACF Executive Director Bryan Burhans put it, "Katy has some excellent experience working with volunteers and science! We are so excited to have her on board."

Katy says she is eager to meet and start working with the volunteers in Maryland, West Virginia and Virginia. "There is so much potential in this part of the country, and so many people who share a passion for the tree, I think it will be wonderful to help increase interest, awareness, and production of chestnuts in these areas."

She is also "excited to watch that seed we worked so hard to pollinate and collect be planted and become seedlings, and, hopefully, something more one day."

**Read MD Chapter President
Gary Carver's Annual Report
and Spring 2010 Report at
www.mdtacf.org**

Click on News/Events

RECENT ORCHARD DEVELOPMENTS

by Ron Kuipers

Did you know that our chapter now maintains 16 orchards, or 18 if you count the two 1970-era mother tree orchards at Sugarloaf Mountain? Recently, two of our most experienced volunteers visited our WSSC orchard at Triadelphia.

Although they had helped with the original planting in 2007, they had trouble identifying the orchard because they were looking for small saplings in tubes, not the young forest in front of them. Maintenance challenges are different each year.

We will soon be inoculating our older backcross orchards to test their blight resistance. Many trees in the Fox Haven and Dickey/Blaxall orchards are large enough to be tested now. However, because these orchards were planted over a three year period (2005-2007) we will postpone inoculations until next year when almost all trees should be ready. The ambrosia beetle is an added complication for these two orchards. Trees cut down and burned to kill the beetles have re-grown with multiple sprouts, but are smaller than the others.

Ambrosia beetle first appeared at the Dickey/Blaxall orchard in 2008 and spread to Fox Haven, Monocacy, Rockville IWLA and WMREC in 2009. Expecting further spreading in 2010, we set out beetle traps at eight orchards, hoping to detect their first arrival and then to spray the infected orchards. To our surprise, the only serious infestation occurred at WMREC, which lacked regular monitoring and was devastated by the time the beetles were detected.

Another alien invasive, the Asian chestnut gall wasp has so far seriously infested only the Sugarloaf East mother tree orchard. The galls have inhibited nut production and may kill infested trees, although another parasitic wasp will eventually bring the gall wasps under control.

New plantings this year include filling in the 4-H site in Garrett County with backcross and intercross nuts. We established three new demonstration orchards: at Black Hill Regional Park in Montgomery County, a Maryland State Highway site in Carroll County and at Ft Detrick in Frederick. These orchards are designed to educate the public on the differences between the different kinds of chestnuts-- American, Chinese, Chinquapins, hybrids and various backcross generations.

Having dedicated volunteers for individual orchards is essential, especially during an orchard's first year or two when the new trees typically require some watering and frequent weeding to maximize tree survival. Robb Newman has taken over mowing at Fox Haven and the Horst family and Mark Grzeszkiewicz continued their mowing of Monocacy and WSSC. Ron Clements, Marisa Slade and Stephen Peck serve as stewards of new orchards at Ft Detrick, State Highway Administration and Black Hill, respectively.

New Orchard Black Hill Regional Park



MDTACF President Gary Carver demonstrates preparation of planting material and planting process

Participants in the planting included Stephen Peck, Maryam Sharifi, Gene Hillegas, Jamie Weaver, Peg Dorgan, Laura Freimanis, Barbara Knapp, Ron Kuipers, Ron Clements, Gary Carver, and Stan Fisher



The Black Hill Regional Park orchard was planted April 3rd after park staff installed deer fencing. This is a demonstration orchard with Chinese, American, F-1hybrids and backcross seeds planted in separate rows and chinquapins planted in the corners.



Orchard steward Stephen Peck (l) and others monitor growth of seedlings after a season of growth.