

# Maryland Chapter of The American Chestnut Foundation

## Winter 2012/2013 Newsletter



THE  
AMERICAN  
CHESTNUT  
FOUNDATION

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### Maryland Chapter Spring Meeting

Our spring meeting will be on March 16, 2013 at 10 a.m. It will be held at the Isaak Walton League on Waring Station Rd in Germantown.

Speakers will include Sara Fitzsimmons, TACF lead regional science coordinator, and Matt Brinckman, mid-Atlantic regional science coordinator. They will focus on the status of breeding and how the Maryland program fits into the big picture.

There will be food and drinks. Check our website [www.mdtaf.org](http://www.mdtaf.org) for the latest information and directions.

### Update on Fox Haven, Triadelphia, and Monocacy Orchard Inoculations

Last spring, TACF's lead regional science coordinator, Sara Fitzsimmons, led the team inoculating the trees in several MD TACF orchards with the chestnut blight fungus. Backcross trees at Fox Haven, Triadelphia, and Monocacy orchards were inoculated. In early November, Sara returned with Matt Brinckman, the Mid-Atlantic regional science coordinator, to evaluate the blight resistance of the



inoculated trees. The inoculations are an important part of the TACF's breeding program to select the backcross trees that are most resistant to the blight for further breeding or seed production.

The low-resistance and poorly shaped trees were removed from the orchards in November and burned. It was a rare volunteer opportunity involving chainsaws and bonfires. (The burning is necessary to keep the blight in the downed trees from "blooming" into neighboring trees.)

More than a dozen volunteers, led by orchard manager Ron Kuipers and Fox Haven steward Darryl Johnson, completed the Fox Haven culling and burning over Thanksgiving weekend. Volunteers from

as far away as Alaska (thanks to the Knapp family) contributed to the effort. The Triadelphia and Monocacy orchards were also rogued in late November.



### New Demonstration Projects

The MD chapter has provided seeds and seedlings for several dozen education/ demonstration plantings at MD parks, schools, public lands, non-profit nature conservancies, housing developments, and one cemetery. The demonstration plantings provide an opportunity to educate the general public about the work of MD TACF, and also contribute to our efforts to preserve the genetic diversity of the American chestnut. Some demonstration projects received the American Chestnut Learning Box, developed by the MD chapter and distributed nationally by TACF.

This fall, MD TACF president Dr. Gary Carver with the help of Jim Curtis, Ron Kuipers, Ron “Klem” Clements, Mark Vollaro, and others, organized demonstration plantings at ten new sites. These include Black Hill Regional Park, the community of Bannockburn, Brightwell Crossing housing development in Poolesville, Fox Haven, Howard County

Conservancy, Park School in Baltimore County, a public park and a cemetery in Thurmont, Woodmont County Club, and the Washington Aqueduct water filtration plant. The demonstration plantings include pure American, Chinese, F1 hybrid, and blight-resistant Restoration 1.0 chestnuts.

The Park School planting (shown in the photo below) is one of several activities the school is undertaking to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the school. The idea for the Park School planting arose, in part, from school librarian Twig George’s corresponding with a former TACF regional science coordinator and TACF president Bryan Burhans. Ms. George comes from a family with a deep connection to America’s forests and wilderness areas. Her mother was Newbery medal winning author Jean Craighead George and her brothers are famous wildlife biologists. Mrs. George was the author of “My Side of the Mountain,” “Julie of the Wolves,” and over one hundred other books, primarily aimed at young adults, about nature and the environment. MD TACF is grateful to Twig George for her generous contribution in memory of her mother, and for providing the impetus for the demonstration orchard at Park School. The elementary students who helped plant the orchard will help



maintain and document the orchard's progress as part of their science classes. The orchard will eventually include other threatened Maryland trees, including elm, hemlock, and ash.

### **MD Orchards Tour During International Chestnut Symposium**

In September, The Fifth International Chestnut Symposium was held at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, WV. One highlight of the conference was the bus tour to Maryland's Sugarloaf Mountain and Monocacy chestnut orchards. This was an important showcase for our chapter. Our orchards were the star attraction for roughly 100 researchers from around the world.

### **Fall Harvest**

The fall harvest successfully kept ahead of the squirrels, deer, and public gleaners, thanks to the efforts of many volunteers. The fall harvest is one of the more popular volunteer opportunities, and is suitable for all ages, with activities ranging from climbing 20-foot ladders to shelling chestnuts from their burs. As with last year, the results were mixed – some trees produced many high quality nuts, while others produced many unpollinated nuts, and critters did get a few. The thousands of nuts harvested, from both controlled and open pollinations, will be planted next year in the chapter's orchards and donated to other chestnut restoration projects, including the Maryland State Tree Nursery and the Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative. To volunteer for next year's harvest, please contact Ron Kuipers. (Also see article on next page about volunteer opportunities.)

### **Forest Service Report on European Settlement-Era forests**

The U.S. Forest Service has recently published a technical report estimating the composition of early European settlement forests in the Monongahela National Forest (in West Virginia). Using old "metes and bounds" survey data, which often used trees as boundary markers, they were able to estimate the composition of the forest at the time of initial European settlement. The most common trees found in the survey data were white oak, sugar maple, American beech, and American chestnut. The results include the frequency of chestnut trees and the types of sites where chestnuts most commonly grew. The complete report is available online at: <http://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/pubs/41448>

### **More Chestnut Articles**

Nature magazine recently published an article by Helen Thompson on the efforts of TACF, entitled "Plant Science: The Chestnut Resurrection" <http://www.nature.com/news/plant-science-the-chestnut-resurrection-1.11504>

The Scientist magazine published an article by Dan Cossins, entitled "American Chestnut to Rise Again" <http://www.the-scientist.com/?articles.view/articleNo/32743/title/American-Chestnut-to-Rise-Again/>

### **Western Maryland Program**

Dr. Katia Engelhardt and others in western Maryland are building a citizen science monitoring program and the goal this year is to introduce the American chestnut to at least 210 individuals in Allegany and Garrett Counties. In May, she will hold a series of workshops to provide guidance on

planting, maintenance, and monitoring. At the workshops, participants will receive 1-4 American chestnuts from MD sources (these are seedlings from the seeds harvested by the chapter in 2011). The goal is to have at least 105 participants in the tree planting and monitoring effort. The monitoring will be done via FieldScope, a National Geographic Internet tool. Also, in March or April, the plan is to plant a new crop of chestnuts with a local high school to raise the next cohort of chestnuts for the next cohort of citizen scientists.

### Volunteer opportunities



During the winter months, MD TACF orchard manager Ron Kuipers can take a well-earned break after a busy harvest season. Winter orchard maintenance activities include repairing deer fencing, removing dead trees, and scouting out new test plots for next spring. If you'd like to volunteer to help in the orchards, either this winter or anytime during the warmer seasons, please contact Ron at <m\_rkuipers@yahoo.com>, or write to the chapter at 21900 Davis Mill Road, Germantown, MD 20876.

Besides orchard maintenance, the workload on the chapter's projects continues to grow. We would like to create a list of members who have time, interest, or skills for

particular tasks. We plan to email those interested when we have a specific need. You can help make this work by taking a moment to send an e-mail to David Gill at [Stickbuilt@hotmail.com](mailto:Stickbuilt@hotmail.com) and identify on which list you would like to be included. Here are the tasks we need help on:

1. Weeding, watering, mowing, and trimming in the orchards
2. Pollination, planting, and harvesting
3. Fence building, mending, and tree culling
4. Tree inoculations and evaluations
5. Administrative - mailings

Don't delay. Send that e-mail today. We really could use your help.

### Meet Matt Brinckman

Matthew Brinckman is TACF's new Mid-Atlantic Regional Science Coordinator. He provides the MD, WV, and VA chapters with expert advice and technical assistance. Since taking this post, Matt has been to MD to attend our fall chapter meeting and to participate in the follow-up research on the orchard inoculations. He also recently led an education seminar for Carroll County public school teachers on chestnut restoration efforts and orchard requirements. You can read about Matt and obtain his contact information on the TACF website at <http://www.acf.org/midatlantic.php>. Matt is second from right in the photo.



### MD TACF Website

Please view and bookmark our web site, [www.mdtaf.org](http://www.mdtaf.org). You will find chestnut science background information, news and links to articles about our chapter, volunteer information, learning materials, chapter organizational information, orchard locations and descriptions, photos of our activities, and links to other chestnut organizations. Also, you can find contact, membership, and donation information.

Jim Curtis is our webmaster. Jim writes: "For your convenience, I try to keep the latest information posted or linked on the home page, but please explore this site. Our photo gallery was recently redesigned and is frequently updated with our many activities. Further, I plan to update the orchard data as new information is provided.

So please enjoy the site, and feel free to contact me for suggestions or comments. Also, I would be glad to accept and post photos or important chapter news. My email address is [curtisjim@comcast.net](mailto:curtisjim@comcast.net)."

### Chinquapin seedlings available from Maryland DNR

The Maryland State Tree Nursery has chinquapin (*castanea pumila*) seedlings on sale now for shipment in early 2013. Price varies on quantity ordered; seedlings are 85 cents each in quantities of 25-75. Many other species are also available.

The chinquapin is related to the American chestnut, but smaller, and is not resistant to the blight. Fair warning that deer, squirrels, and countless other woodland creatures enjoy the nuts, so if you plant chinquapins, plan on sharing the harvest.

See more information at:  
[www.dnr.state.md.us/forests/nursery/](http://www.dnr.state.md.us/forests/nursery/).  
Or, call 1-800-TREESMD



### Roasting Chestnuts on an Open Fire

At the recent fall meeting, board member Mark Vollaro roasted American chestnuts on an open fire for attendees to enjoy. If you'd like to try roasting supermarket

chestnuts, here's a few tips:

- Pick nuts that are heavy, hard, and not cracked. Needless to say, mold is a bad sign. (Unfortunately, stores do not store chestnuts properly. They keep them at room temperature in a wicker basket. Unlike other nuts that have a high fat content, chestnuts stored this way will dry out and get moldy. Chestnuts should be stored like fruit, kept cool and moist. Buy them early in the season for best quality.)
- Use a wire chestnut roaster or heavy pan
- Prepare the chestnuts by cutting an X or a slice in the shell
- Make sure the fire is really hot (white ash coals)

About 20 minutes is plenty - when the chestnuts start to split open, they are done. For that street vendor taste of moist "roasted" chestnuts, try boiling for 25 minutes, then peel while warm. Packaged peeled, boiled chestnuts may also be available in local grocery stores this time of year.

### Support the Maryland Chapter

Please donate to support the MD chapter. All donations are tax deductible. Donations may be made via the TACF website at <http://shop.acf.org/donationtotacf.asp> (select the "Donate to My State Chapter" box)

Checks (made out to MD Chapter, TACF) may be mailed to:

**Barbara Knapp**  
**21900 Davis Mill Road**  
**Germantown, Md 20876**

### Preparations Begin for a "Delmarva Restoration Branch"

Four visitors from the Delaware Nature Society visited Gary Carver to discuss formation of a "Delmarva Restoration Branch" that would be affiliated with the Maryland chapter. They visited the Black Hill Regional Park orchard, met with Stan Fisher, steward of the orchard, and with Lynette Lenz, environmental specialist at the visitors center and visited trees at Sugarloaf Mountain. Linette showed them a display of the center's American chestnut learning box. Gary explained about chestnut plantings and provided information on TACF and restoration branches. Matt Brinkman and Sara Fitzsimmons, TACF regional science coordinators, have provided information and advice. The target date for the first restoration branch meeting is fall 2013. This spring, Gary will lead a group of chapter members to visit the society's Abbott's Mill Nature Center. We will help pick a site for a demonstration/education planting. One of the Delaware visitors, Ed Crawford, already donated funds to purchase the TACF 3-panel sign for the demonstration planting.

### Poolesville HS, Kettler Forlines Homes Receive Award for Chestnut Planting

The Maryland National Capital Building Industry Association awarded the educational/demonstration chestnut planting at Brightwell Crossing Development in Poolesville its 2012 Environmental Award. Kettler Forlines Homes and 2012 Poolesville High School graduate Alex Pike, who led the project that included a team of students, received the award in the category of "Partnership with an Environmental or Civic Organization." The award recognizes their work with the Global Ecology House Magnet Program at Poolesville High School and MDTACF. At the new orchard, signage identifies the trees, the history of the American chestnut and the blight, and the work of TACF. Steve Haggblade, MDTACF education chair, coordinated the project.

