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Volume 6, No. 1

Newsletter of the New York State Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation, Inc.

Spring 1996

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

ANOTHER PROBLEM

The oriental Chestnut Gall Wasp is spreading from south to north. It isn't known for sure what its range will be. As a result, it seemed appropriate that the NYS Chapter should work with Dr. Sandra Anagnostakis on a program to learn as much as we can about the wasp. ACFNY has funded plane fare for Dr. Anagnostakis to go to Georgia this Summer to get started. After more is known about the Chestnut Gall Wasp, we can then ask ESF Syracuse to search for a gene to block the wasp's ability to attack the chestnut trees. ACFNY should not allow the Gall Wasp problem to exist and spoil our gene transfer program after it is successful in restoring the timber type American chestnut to a blight-free condition. Therefore, another program will have to be developed and funded to accomplish this.

Woody Clark has resigned as Director of District 8. He was instrumental in getting our new District 8 Acting Director, Chip Leavy, to take over effective immediately. Chip will have trees for sale and may be reached at 716-293-2540. Welcome Chip!

Thanks Woody for the great job you did and good luck to you in your new business venture. We look forward to seeing you at future meetings.

Long live the American Chestnut.

Herbert F. Darling, Jr.
President ACFNY

NEXT RESEARCH STEP: THE GREEN THUMB

The Green Thumb Program, a part of the Research Pert Plan, has been launched. Little chestnut preemies are about to leave the nurturing laboratory and face their future world.

In the lab at the College of Forestry, Syracuse, scientists make trees from snippets of tree tissue, and they grow their roots in sterile cabinets. Soon they must enter the kind of life that trees live in with harsh soils, weather, hunger, too much or too little sun, and microbes.

Under the guidance of Dr. Charles Maynard, CESE volunteer members are starting a series of "tree kindergarten" experiments to see how they respond to various outdoor soils and schedules. A few wild tree plants left over from the days when the Lab workers were testing rooting schedules will be used.

If we quickly find the way to acclimatize them, we're a step nearer the goal. If they



Many youngsters were in evidence at the District 9 Zoar Planting Day. When these children are teens, hopefully they will help them with the reforestation.

don't make it, we'll get clues to what needs aren't met, to try more people's ideas. Complete records are being kept by the volunteers so that a successful method can be used and verified by the scientists.

This is being done while the scientists at CESF are concentrating on establishing the protocol for the transformation phase. This acclimatization segment being done concurrently by volunteers will save a significant amount of time in completing the Pelt Plan.

The first experiment was begun on May 9 by ACFNY's #1 Green Thumber, Herb Darling, President, with Dr. Charles Maynard, CESF, Stan Wirsig, Vice President, Research, and Arlene Wirsig, Secretary as recorder participating. The program will be expanding in the coming months.

DUPONT'S GENEROUS GIFT

A rain swept chestnut plantation and a group of hardy workers from the DuPont Niagara Falls plant plus children and teachers from Hyde Park, DuPont's adopted school, converged on Saturday, May 4, 1996 for an annual clean-up and inspection of the area. At this time, Mr. James F. Sanders, Plant Manager of DuPont Specialty Chemicals, Niagara Falls presented a \$4000 check to ACFNY for use in the Education program of the Chapter.

Stan Wirsig, ACFNY Vice President, who accepted this donation announced that this generous gift will make possible the completion of the first phase of the new animated video featuring Charlie Chestnut, Ginny Gene and Buster Blight which will be used in the school programs. A short review of the chestnut story included the progress made by the research programs toward conquering the blight, and Arlene Wirsig, ACFNY Secretary/Treasurer, presented a site plaque to be used at the DuPont planting.

Much appreciation was expressed for the continuing interest and support being given by DuPont.

DISTRICT NEWS

DISTRICT 1. (Long Island). John E Potente DMD. Director. (516) 232-1566. A March letter from the District Director to members of the District outlined some of the spring plans. The agenda included the location and verification of large American chestnut trees on Long Island, the organization of plantings throughout the District and the scheduling of talks in educational institutions and nature centers. John has met with the Long Island State Parks and Recreation Commission to coordinate plantings of stock received from ACFNY. As part of a public education program a display will be exhibited at Sweetbrier Nature Center on June 9. Members wishing to help in Long Island activities should phone John.

DISTRICT 2. (New York City) Margaret C. Collins, Director (718) 445-6436. In January, Dr. Andrew Greler, a professor at Queens College and an expert in the local flora and fauna, and Margaret gave a multimedia presentation at the Alley Pond Environmental Center (APEC) on the effects of the chestnut blight on the New York City area, and on the various approaches being adopted by the ACFNY to fight the blight and reintroduce the chestnut into its former habitat. A fall planting at APEC is in the initial planning stages.

On April 20. Region 2 had its first experimental planting in NYC when 12 seedlings from the 1994 fall crop of chestnuts were planted with approximately 222 other indigenous trees at Udall's Cove Upland Preserve in Queens. Bruce Stuart organized the event, and there was a large group of volunteers from Shelter Rock Cub Scout Pack, and Boy Scout Troop, as well as additional volunteers from the Udall's Cove Preservation Committee. The City Parks Foundation delivered the trees from Staten Island and provided additional supplies, expertise and manpower.

Assuming all goes well with the experimental program, larger plantings are planned in the fall in both City park lands and on various school properties in a special program with the DEC.

In addition, the City Parks Foundation is incorporating chestnut trees into a new multiple visit plant propagation program for schools and community groups in the Bronx that will be run out of the Native Plant Garden in Van Cortlandt Park. Tony Emmerich and Mary Leou of the CPF will continue to work with ACFNY to develop funding and educational programs for the fight-the-blight and chestnut re-introduction efforts here in District 2.

DISTRICT 3. (Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster and Westchester Counties) Frank Munzer, Director, (516) 361-2102.

A District 3 meeting attracted 15 people who were brought up-to-date by Craig Hibben on the research program at SUNY's College of Environmental

Science and Forestry. This was followed by reports about District 3 "seed orchard" plantations by Ted Kozlowski who described the planting of 300 trees at Lasdon Park and Kevin Malloy who will soon have 200 trees at the Weathersfield plantation. Following the reports the group planted the 300 seeds brought back from the Annual Meeting Harvest Exchange. When older these will be transferred to the District 3 plantations.

DISTRICT 4 (Albany, Columbia, Delaware, Greene, Montgomery, Otsego, Rensselaer, Schenectady and Schoharie Counties). Lewis Decker, Director, (518) 725-0473. Twenty four American chestnut trees will be planted in Gloversville's new Heritage Park in a special section. The seedlings will come from Mr. Rand who has collected them in the arboretum in Esperance and a tree near Utica. One of the District's seed bearing trees has died, however there are several healthy smaller trees around it that the owner will preserve. Lew was honored as the "Outstanding Citizen" of the City of Gloversville for his work as Historian and other civic contributions including his work with the ACFNY.

DISTRICT 6 (Jefferson, Herkimer, Lewis, Oneida and St. Lawrence Counties) T. Urling Walker. Director (315) 782-3153. The Director made a presentation to the Watertown Rotary Club in March. (This Club has a Tree Committee). He has been appointed to the Tree Watertown Committee. This civic group has begun making annual tree plantings in Watertown and is encouraging others to help in restoring the beauty of the City. The Lowville DEC plantation where about 100 American chestnuts are growing may supply trees for the Tree Watertown program. The program to map larger American chestnuts growing in the area has been delayed by the fact that foresters who were to supply the information have been diverted to clear the debris from the 1995 "blow down" in the Forever Wild area of the Adirondack Park.

DISTRICT 7 (Broome, Cayuga, Chenango, Cortland, Madison, Onondaga, Oswego, Tioga and Tompkins Counties) Roy Hopke, Director (607) 648-5512. A March District meeting planned the spring activities which included installing bird nets on tubes and planting of sprouted seeds in both the Sherburne and Tully plantations April 20. Fertilizer will be applied in June at the Sherburne site. The seed collection group will be led by John Ellis (607) 467-6039. In District 7 NOTES to members the Importance of seed collection was cited as: "Our opportunity for this day and time is to collect the genetic heritage of what is left of the species and keep it going...". A three dollar donation to help defray District costs was requested of District members.

DISTRICT 8 (Chemung, Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Schuyler, Seneca, Stueben, Wayne and Yates Counties). Due to the press of business, Woody Clark has resigned as Director. In his place Chip Leavy has been appointed as Acting Director Chip's phone number is (716) 293-2540. We thank Woody for all his hard work, help and enthusiasm and welcome Chip to lead the way.

DISTRICT 9 (Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Niagara and Wyoming Counties) Bill Snyder. Director, (716) 839-5456. A March organizational meeting brought out over 20 attendees. The group first toured the "Weakening Web" exhibit at the Buffalo Museum of Science where there was an ACFNY display at the exhibit's entrance. The 6th Annual Planting Day at DEC's Zoar Multiple Use Area was planned. The group packaged seed kits for the education program's initial reach into elementary schools. Plans for an Erie County promotion and festival at Chestnut Ridge Park were discussed. Dave Culligan told of the Western New York activities of the Forest Owners Assoc. A Springville, NY 8th grade student, Ian Steff, showed his Science Fair display entitled "What research is doing to save the American chestnut".

The Zoar Planting Day attracted 103 people, the largest turnout in its 6 year history.



Over 300 seeds brought back from the Annual Meeting Harvest Exchange were planted by members of District 3 during their spring meeting.

JOIN THE AMERICAN CHESTNUT FESTIVAL JUNE 29

All ACFNY members and friends are invited to this Saturday June 29 all-day even: at Erie County's Chestnut Ridge Park. It will be family oriented with educational programs, games, park and history tours.

American chestnuts were once plentiful in this Park as the name suggests. As part of the program you can assist in the morning's botanical survey to locate remaining American chestnut trees. We will be joined by members of the Niagara Frontier Botanical Society, Cooperative Extension, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Americorp, and NY State Forest Owner's Association. And, if you wish, you can participate in the planting of an American chestnut "seed orchard" with the Buffalo Audubon Society in a remote area of the park. Many of the seedlings to be used in the planting will have been grown by school children.

The Festival will begin at 9:00 am with registration at the Park Casino and continue through 5:00 pm. Plan a picnic with family or friends, or join us. For more information call Glen Gelinias (716) 825-7760.

Our thanks to the Erie County Parks Dept. and Chestnut Ridge Park. This project is financially supported by the Erie County Education Institute, Inc.

ANNIVERSARY ANNUAL MEETING FOR NEXT OCTOBER

The rustic-dormitory-do it yourself-house party type Annual Meeting has been enjoyed for the past two years, and they've been great. However!

This year we're going for a change, and be pampered! We'll be in Rochester, NY October 26-27, 1996 and the Radisson Inn near the airport will be doing the pampering. Sit-down meals, being waited on, indoor heated pool, coffee service in each room, complimentary shuttle service to the big shopping mall, even ice water and candy on the tables in the meeting room are the order of the day. And we'll still have the hot roasting chestnuts at registration that we've so enjoyed in the past.

There will be a Hospitality Room on Friday evening October 25 for a pre-meeting social get together and set up of exhibits, and if members wish to stay over night, Radisson is giving ACFNY a special rate of 1-4 people in a room for \$62/night. Great opportunity for an inexpensive family week-end away in a scenic area. There's even a hiking trail through the woods behind the Inn for your morning jog.

Spouses will have much to choose from if they get tired of chestnuts including one of the new Book-Music-Coffee Bar Stores, a "Christmas in October" Craft & Gift Show, and seven pages of "Things To Do" for the whole family.

The meeting will include stimulating reports on science, education and regional activities, a presentation by Dr. Charles Maynard and Dr. William Powell, CESF principal researchers, giving a report on the progress of the genetic engineering research, and workshops for both new and experienced members.

Please let us know if you have a particular workshop you would like to have provided. Also, if you have something interesting you would like to share, please let us know so that we can provide table space.

A high point has always been a special speaker for the Chestnut luncheon. Several prospects have been approached and the finalist will be reported soon.

We are being hosted by ACFNY's Region 8, under the leadership of Acting Director Chip Leavy. The Region is working on arranging a Chestnut Hike following the luncheon.

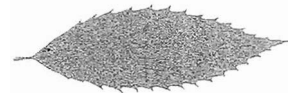
The day will be topped off by a special treat - a dinner cruise on the historic Erie Canal complete with riding through a lock, music, good food and socializing with new and old chestnut friends.

The annual Chestnut Exchange, an important part of the New York restoration program, will be held Sunday morning with an open Board Meeting following. Noon will officially close the 1996 meeting, but you can always continue the chestnut talk out in the lobby.

Watch for details in September, but, put October 26-27, 1996 on your calendar now.



Enthusiastic Cubs, Roy Scouts and volunteers assisted in the first District 2 planting at Udall's Cove Upland Preserve in Queens.



IN MEMORIAM

Memorial gifts have been received for the work of ACFNY in honor of the following:

- Paul Bishop
- Rachel Q. Bentley
- Louise Keese
- Mrs. David Rockefeller, Sr.

6th CHESTNUT PLANTING DAY IN WESTERN NEW YORK

The sixth annual Chestnut Planting Day held on April 27, 1996 was a success. A record 103 people attended the event which took place at the chestnut plantation on Zoar Valley Multiple Use Area in Erie County, New York.

One hundred sixty trees were planted to replace seedlings that died. Those trees died due to the drought conditions last year. This year's efforts were to do maintenance in the existing plantation.

After several hours of work, the 103 chestnut enthusiasts relaxed with an old fashioned campfire featuring well-done hotdogs and marshmallows. Eighteen members of Dr. Linda Chalker-Scott's Biology class at Buffalo State College assisted. Boy Scouts planted a special grove nearby.

The New York State Chapter American Chestnut Foundation sponsors this event to serve a number of purposes. It is an excellent opportunity for members and others to learn planting techniques from professionals and then put them into practice by actually planting trees.

From Videotapes to Classroom programs, The Educational Committee Is Hard at Work

The script writing for our new videotape targeted for elementary school children is in process. Seven Educational Committee members and teacher advisors spent three long evenings creating a storyboard which will be scripted and pulled together for videotape production. It is hoped that both the videotape and the finishing touches on school lesson plans conforming to the guidelines of New York's Elementary School Syllabus will be funded to begin the program during the planting season of 1997.

This spring as many as forty seed kits were sent to interested teachers. Each kit included thirty American chestnut seeds ready for classroom discussion and planting. The seeds will be planted by the students at home or on the school ground, and some reserved for planting at Erie County's Chestnut Ridge Park during the June 29, Chestnut Festival.

Glen Gelinis, the Educational Committee chair, was invited to make the closing lecture

about the plight of the American Chestnut at the conclusion of the Weakening Web Exhibit at the Buffalo Museum of Science. He was also guest educator for 18 classes teaching children in grades K through 4 at Niagara Fall's Hyde Park Elementary School about the fate of the American Chestnut. This school has been adopted by the Niagara Falls plant of DuPont. By their request ACFNY people returned after an enthusiastic response to our programs there in 1995.

American Chestnut Prominent At Allegheny State Park Celebrations

On May 2, Western New York's Allegheny State Park held a reunion of the members of the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) who were involved in developing the Park during the depression days. American chestnuts became the focus of their program as CCC veterans planted three "seed orchards" of twelve American chestnuts each near Quaker Lake.

On July 29 the Park will celebrate its 75th anniversary. Again American chestnuts will be planted as a part of this commemorative program. Volunteers should contact Herb Darling 632-1125 or Bill Snyder 839-5466.

TREE RECORDING VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Want to help keep tree records in your district? You'll be a part of our chestnut history. Genes hide for generations, so future breeders will need our genealogies.

We'd like to have a list of volunteers who will help by getting our paper records verified and into our database. If you are computer friendly, that will be extra helpful.

If you can help, write us at the Museum address, and we'll get back to you soon.



Many hands make light work. Over 60 people attended the Zoar Planting Day when 160 seedlings were planted to replace those lost to drought.

Oriental Chestnut Gall Wasp Found on American Chestnut Trees

It now appears that we have a second threat to the life of the American chestnut tree already laid low by the fungus blight. The following is a description of the new killer sent to us by Dr. Sandra Anagnostakis who mentioned the problem in her presentation at the 1995 Annual Meeting.

The Oriental Chestnut Gall Wasp, was found for the first time on American chestnut trees growing at the southern end of the native range of this tree. This insect has been on Chinese chestnut trees in Georgia since 1974.

The insect lays eggs in the vegetative and mixed buds and, as the larvae develop, 1/3 to 1/2 inch green or rose colored galls are formed on the leaves, petioles, and even catkins. These galls suppress shoot elongation and reduce fruiting; trees with severe infestations lose their vigor and often die.

The Gall Wasp has one generation a year in Georgia, Japan, and Korea. The first instar larvae overwinter inside the chestnut bud. In the spring before chestnut buds normally begin to break, the gall wasp larvae begin to mature and convert the bud into a gall. Galls develop in 7 to 14 days and often contain portions of developing leaves stems, petioles, and flowers. The larvae feed 20 to 30 days within the galls before pupating. Adult wasps, 1/8 inch long, begin emerging from the galls during the last week of May and the first week of June in Georgia. Adult emergence is complete in approximately 3 weeks. As yet males are unknown in this species; only female wasps have been collected in Georgia, Japan, and Korea. After emergence, the female lays three to five eggs in a cluster inside the buds. More than one adult may oviposit in the same bud, and some buds may have up to 25 eggs. The eggs hatch in 40 days, and larval growth is very slow through the autumn and winter.

Spread of the gall wasp occurs as a result of movement of infested twigs or shoots, or by flight of the adults. After adult emergence, the gall dries, becomes woodlike, and remains attached to the tree for several years. Pruning and destroying infested shoots may slow the spread of the insect.

In 1963 gall wasp was reported to be threatening the chestnut industry of Japan

and Korea. Since its introduction into Georgia, it has nearly eliminated the chestnut industry (making use of the Chinese Chestnut) in the state. American chestnut seedlings from Southington, CT were planted in Byron, GA in 1989 and have been heavily galled by this insect. Galls on native Georgia American chestnut trees were seen on 19, June 1993 in the Chattahoochee National Forest in northern Georgia.

Since the Appalachian Trail extends from this area to Maine, and since American Chestnuts are found along the whole length of the trail, there will be a source of host material for the gall wasp to allow it to move throughout the native range of our tree. Nurseries selling chestnuts in Georgia, Tennessee, and North Carolina should make sure there are no signs of the wasp in their area before shipping chestnut nursery stock to other parts of the country.

VIRGINIA POLLINATORS NEEDED BY ACF

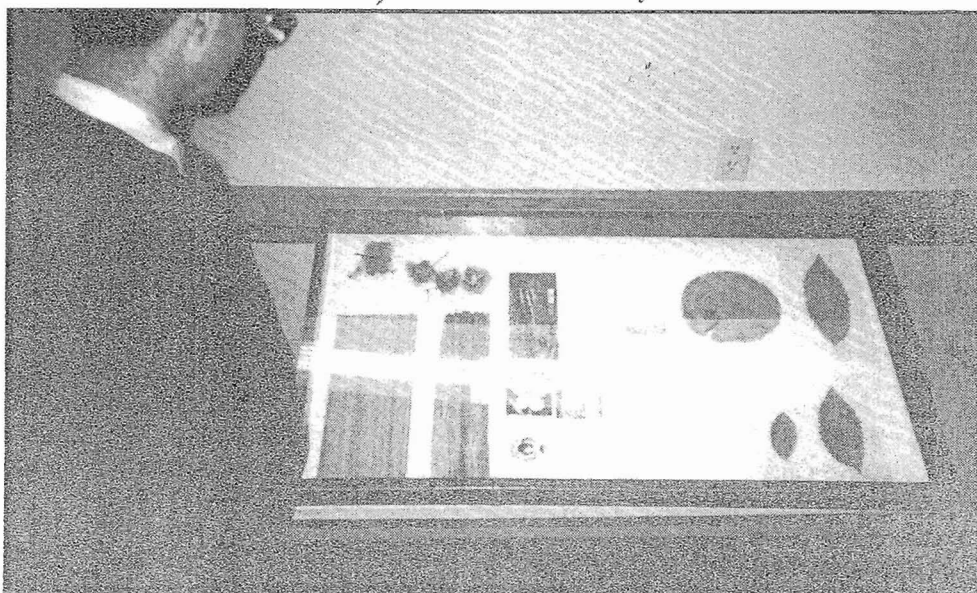
Anyone interested in helping with the pollination for the back crossing program at the ACF Meadowview Farm in Virginia around the middle of June, please call the National Office at (802) 447-0110.

DEC FORESTERS USE OUTREACH TO HELP LOCATE SURVIVING TREES

With an increase of reports about surviving American chestnut trees surfacing in and around Central New York, Region 7 D.E.C. Forestry Staff decided to create a display for their Sherburne office.

Members of the Sherburne DEC office, Betsy Jensen and Robert Off, teamed up to create a display highlighting the American Chestnut Tree—past and present. Ms. Jensen painted the display board highlighting a mature chestnut tree surrounded by smaller paintings of chestnut twigs in various stages throughout the year, including flowering and nut production. Mr. Off organized a wooden display case which presents examples of the American Chestnut tree's many forms and uses. On display are chestnut burs with nuts, leaves, twigs with catkins attached, a tree cross section, old chestnut fence post and chestnut lumber plank.

The display was used to gather information from outdoor recreationalists seeking licenses as to the whereabouts of surviving chestnut trees that may be producing viable nuts. To date, many leads have come in referencing the locations of "surviving legacies" scattered amongst the forests of New York.



District DEC Foresters prepared a display of American chestnut leaves, burs, seeds and wood samples along with hand-out material for their Sherburne office to encourage visitors to report viable seed producing seeds.

The Bur
NY State Chapter
American Chestnut Foundation Inc.
c/o Buffalo Museum of Science
1020 Humboldt Parkway
Buffalo, NY 14211

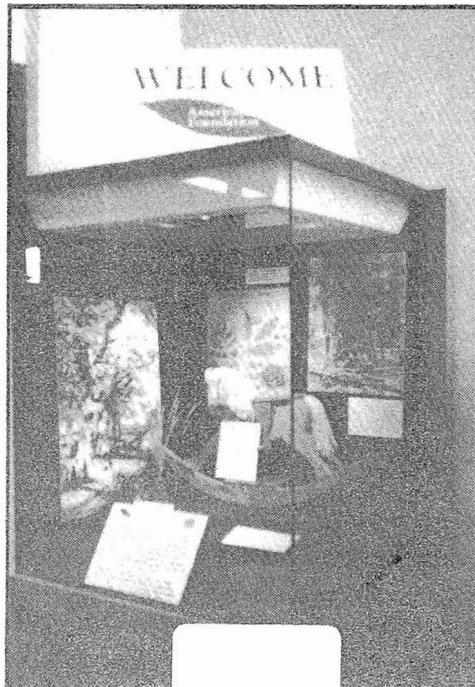
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NOMINATIONS FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

New York State is divided into nine Districts. A director from each District will be sought, as well as general board members. Nominations for the Board of Directors are being sought. Their duties will include attendance at annual meetings, help in developing membership in their District, and seeking-out of interested leaders. Please send nominations with a brief resume to:

Nominating Committee, ACFNY
c/o Buffalo Museum of Science
1020 Humboldt Parkway
Buffalo, NY 14211.

Nominations must be received by
September 1, 1996.



This display of American chestnut-made items and posters was shown during the Buffalo Museum of Science's exhibit about species extinction: "The Weakening Web".

DID YOU RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

ACFNY is a totally volunteer, non-profit organization receiving no funding from any governmental group. It is operationally sustained by your membership dues and contributions. Please renew now if you have not already done so.

A tree planting for all ages was held across the street from DuPont's Specialty Chemical plant in Niagara Falls. DuPont has been an enthusiastic sponsor of ACFNY activities.

