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

Volume 10, No. 1

Spring/Summer 2000

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

While locating new existing Americat chestnut trees for the gene pool is still our number one priority, it is time to establish all the characteristics necessary to have a successful restoration plan. This will be the center for discussion at our TACFNY Annual Meeting this Fall.

Things to be included are: compatible blooming times, cold resistance, large or small nut crops, size of nuts, leaves not dropping (exposing the tree to excess winter damage), upright timber type form, disease resistance (vigor), natural seed propagation at present growing site, soil types good for natural propagation and the necessity of mycorrhizae. I am sure there will be more considerations that will arise as we discuss them. Please think about this and jot down your thoughts for the meeting.

The reforestation program needs to be put in writing; as yet we do not know the best ways to deal with the reintroduction. Resistant pollen taken to wild trees, bagging trees in our existing orchards to produce seeds from the resistant pollen, planting resistant trees in new orchards (all resistant trees only) to get totally resistant seedlings only, growing embryonic trees – these are just a few points to consider.

Grafting to existing wild trees also needs to be discussed.

As you can see, the job before us is large and needs everyone's thoughts so as not to miss any possibilities of shortening the reforestation and assuring the success of the program.

LONG LIVE THE AMERICAN CHESTNUT!



A BUSY SUMMER FOR RESEARCH

The College of Environmental Science and Forestry (CESF) research teams will be hard at work in the lab this summer. Dr. Maynard's team is working to improve the protocols for the transformation process, while Dr. Powell's team designs new multi-gene combinations for increased resistance.

Usually at this time our field teams are busy watching the chestnut buds for the right time for pollination, bagging and then rushing the juvenile embryos to Syracuse for the CESF team's research. This year Dr. Maynard has all of his team concentrating on the transformation research using the present lines instead of processing new embryos.

That doesn't mean that our TACFNY field teams have time off, however. They are needed for searching out new parent trees to add to the cell lines and recording their GPS coordinates. They also will be working with the surveyor doing the New York State American chestnut tree official inventory.

A much appreciated grant from the National Wild Turkey Federation, Inc., has made it possible for a professionally-designed survey. It will cover known American chestnut trees,

wild and in our seed orchards, planted from harvest exchanges during the last 10 years. It will include an "Is it Alive" determination, then measurements, characteristics, GSP coordinates and comments on the site. Leaf samples will be preserved for a permanent collection to be housed at CESF in Syracuse, and a DNA testing report.

Mr. Ryan MacFee, a graduate student who has been working on the TACFNY chestnut project this past year at CESF, was appointed to begin this project June 1, 2000. He will be supervised by Dr. Maynard and Dr. Powell, and in the Fall will be developing this material for his thesis. This will be useful for ongoing research and future plant breeders. He will be working with TACFNY field team members with visits being arranged according to time available, and whether owners can be reached to grant an appointment. He is looking forward to sharing their knowledge, and recording their information.

The immediate report will include the up-to-date New York State American chestnut tree map. This will be on display at the Annual Meeting on October 13-15, 2000 in Canandaigua, NY.



DISTRICT 1...DR. JOHN POTENTE, DIRECTOR
(Counties of Nassau and Suffolk)
516-232-1566

After five years of searching for and pollinating flowering American Chestnut trees on Long Island, seeds were finally collected in the fall of 1999. Some went on to the research program at the School of Environmental Science and Forestry at Syracuse, and another dozen that survived overwintering in the refrigerator were planted in the private preserve of "Native America" in Hauppauge, Long Island this spring. This will be the beginning of the orchard for pure Long Island stock seedlings. A major article devoted to this effort is featured in the latest issue of the publication *Native America*, a well-composed house organ of the Long Island environmental organization.

DISTRICT 2...MARGARET COLLINS, DIRECTOR
(New York City)
718-445-6436
nycchestnut@aol.com

With the American chestnut planting in Central Park (see separate article), District 2 has achieved its first goal of successfully planting chestnut trees in parks in each of the five boroughs. The next goals are locating and mapping all viable chestnut trees for the GSP project and expanding the Charlie Chestnut educational program. Margaret would like anyone interested in participating in these important efforts to contact her. Also, those interested in learning where American chestnut trees exist or once existed in the NY Metropolitan area can view the Brooklyn Botanical Gardens internet page at:
<http://www.bbg.org/research/nymflencyclopedia/fag/cas0010.htm>.

DISTRICT 3...FRANK MUNZER, DIRECTOR
(Counties of Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster and Westchester)
914-266-5638

A planting day was held on May 6 using seedlings from seeds provided by other Districts throughout New York State. The seedlings were grown in the Institute of Ecosystem Studies greenhouse in Washington Hollow, NY. The planting site was behind the Institute's greenhouse. Trees planted using 1995 seeds were supplied to the New York City Parks Department for planting in Central Park. These trees were grown in Lath Sheds of the above Institute and have reached heights of fifteen feet and are very healthy specimens of American chestnut trees. Thanks to Rollins Landscape for making the trees professionally ready for shipment to New York City.

DISTRICT 6...T. URLING WALKER, DIRECTOR
(Counties of Jefferson, Herkimer, Lewis, Oneida and St. Lawrence)
315-782-3153

Part of the third development phase of Watertown's Thompson Park Conservancy includes an area to be devoted to raising and displaying true American chestnuts. The trees are grown to four or five feet tall in a secluded area and then transplanted in the designated area. Thanks to one of DEC's foresters, an American chestnut of about ten inches DBH has been reported growing in a Clayton, NY farmyard. It will be checked out when leafing begins.

DISTRICT 7...ROY D. HOPKE, DIRECTOR
(Counties of Broome, Cayuga, Chenango, Cortland, Madison, Onondaga, Oswego, Tioga and Tompkins)
607-648-5512
Snowhawke@Juno.com

On April 30, members planted 45 trees at the Sherburne plantation. The Plantation is looking very good due to heavy mulching to keep the grass competition down. Deer browsing is a continuing problem.

DISTRICT 9...BILL SNYDER, DIRECTOR
(Counties of Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Niagara and Wyoming)
716-839-5456

On April 29, 65 people, including an Amherst, NY Boy Scout troop went to work replacing dead trees in the DEC's Zoar Valley Multiple Use Area. 150 trees were replanted and protected by staked shelters. The planting was followed by a hot dog roast.



John H. Gordon, Jr., a TACFNY Director, demonstrates the technique for planting American chestnut seedlings at the start of District 9's Planting Day this spring.

AMERICAN CHESTNUT TREES FEATURED IN NEW YORK CITY ARBOR DAY

Some people think of New York City as paved with cement. But, in fact, there are 28,000 acres of green space with a dynamic program to provide the heritage of a rich natural world for future urbanites as well as a sense of environmental connection.

On Arbor Day 2000, TACF and TACFNY were lead players in a ceremony reintroducing the American chestnut to Central Park. The event was coordinated by the NYC Parks and Recreation Dept. and Project X of the Urban Park Rangers whose focus is on the reintroduction of the species to parks citywide.

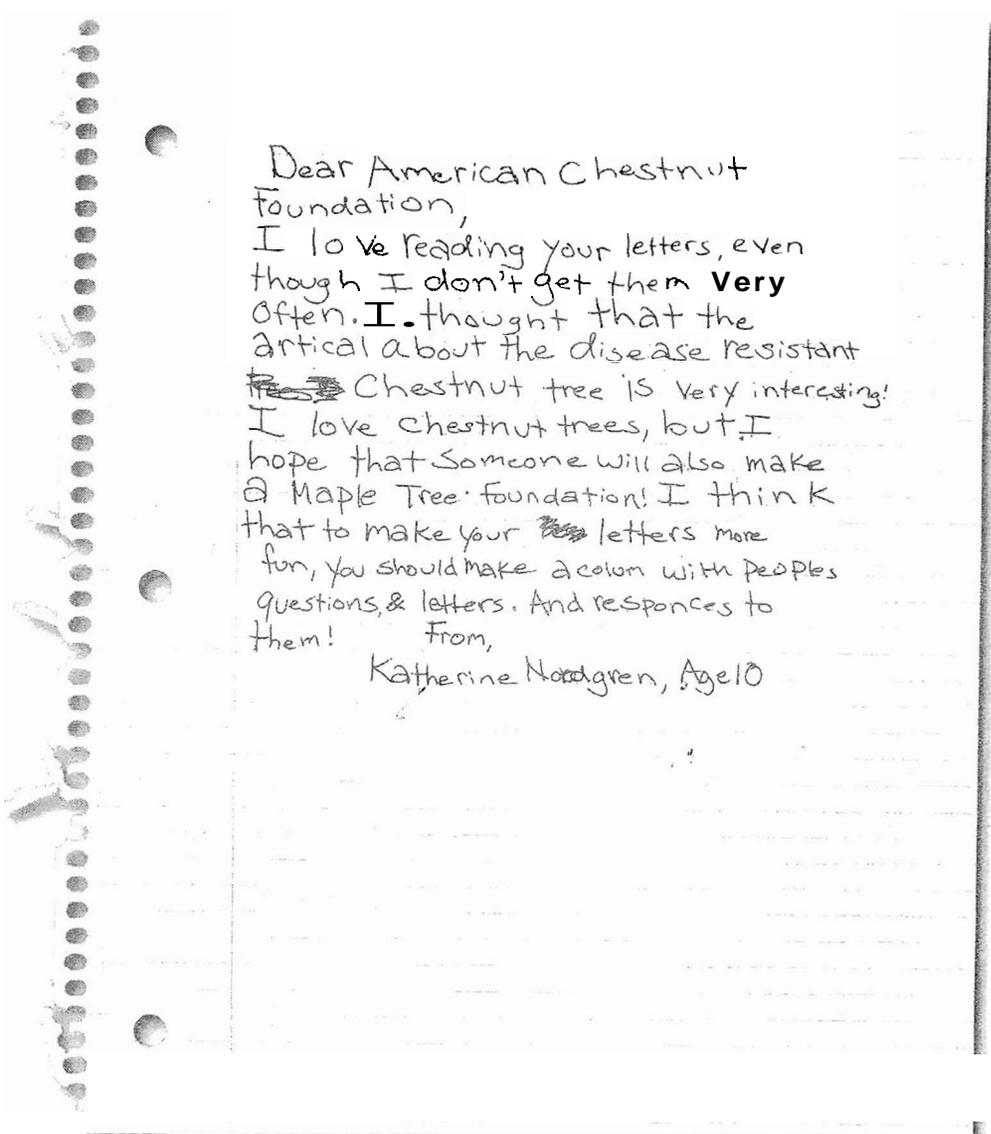
Margaret Collins, TACFNY's New York City Director, and Marshall Case, Executive Director of TACF, were on stage to describe their respective programs. Henry Stem, Commissioner of NYC Parks and James Lyons, Undersecretary of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, also addressed those attending the ceremony. Ms. Collins presented the TACFNY President's Award to Commissioner Stem for his support of the American chestnut program and to the City Parks Foundation.

The formal Arbor Day ceremony was completed with the planting of a fifteen-foot American chestnut supplied through the efforts of members in District 3. That done, the remainder of the ten New York State-grown American chestnuts were planted in the Northwoods with the TACFNY placing interpretive signage describing the near-demise of the American chestnut species and the research effort to protect the tree from a lethal fungus. Six hybridized trees from the national TACF program were planted at the Ramble area of Central Park with a similar sign.

STUDENT PROJECT WINS GOLD MEDAL

Students from Casey Middle School, Jeffrey Justin and Bryan Sharry, received the Gold Medal and a special award at the regional finals in area student science fair project competition. This is the first time that we have conveyed this special American Chestnut Award at the Western New York Science Congress. The Chestnut Award has existed for about four years and is presented to student projects that focus

on some aspect of the American chestnut and are also medal winners in the normal student regional competition. We hope to grant this award more frequently in the future. The two seventh-gradestudents were awarded first place for their project that promotes community education and involvement in the restoration of the American chestnut.



The above letter was received from ten-year-old Katherine Nordgren who is a TACFNY member.

GROW, YOU STALL ED CHESTNUT TREES!

Sometimes chestnut trees stall as soon as the nut is planted. Leaves become yellow due to lack of oxygen in the soil. The usual cause is soil that is too wet. Therefore, drain the soil so the tree is on a ridge, never in a puddle; then, too, several feet above fluctuating water known as the water table. You can see if this is a problem by digging a hole when spring starts, and note how full of water the hole becomes.

Sometimes chestnut trees stall during the growing season. The usual cause is too basic (alkaline) a soil. Leaves become yellow, but the first growth stalls in early July, many weeks too early. Acid watering as for azalea (two cups of vinegar in five gallons of water) usually restarts growth and prevents the yellowing leaves. The typical American chestnut grows on a blueberry, acid soil. There are races which populate calcium-magnesium sand. The low-land races are usually found on the flats near the shores of the Great Lakes. Eventually you will have to transplant your chestnut tree to an appropriate soil. Check the roots during transplanting to see if they are covered with 3/8" white "spruce needles" which indicate these roots like their soil.

Sometimes chestnut trees stall at bush size due to lack of a dominant center stem. The usual cause is stunting by deer browsing, or the globe-shaped trees recently transplanted came out of the wrong soil. The quick fix is to cut the tree off at the ground. Only a healthy tree should be decapitated. Scan trees during the summer, assuring yourself that the trees to be decapitated have dark green leaves. Mark them, and return during the winter to cut them off at ground level. The following spring, the tree will regenerate from buds around the root crown. A tall tree shelter should be staked over this root crown to force all growth upward and crowd weaker sprouts to die off. These weak sprouts will be pruned away next spring. If the tree was healthy, and small compared to the tree shelter, decapitation would not be necessary, but only needs the removal of side branches in spring. Because growth in the tree shelter will be super fast, the new style tree shelters should be used. These have 5/8" holes drilled around the base to allow the wind to enter, shake the tree, stiffen, and harden its growth.

GOOD GROWING!

Planting Tips Submitted By
John H. Gordon, Jr., TACFNY Director

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. Their duties will include attendance at annual meetings, help in developing membership in their District, and seeking interested leaders. Please send nonunations with a brief resume to:

Nominating Committee
TACFNY
do The Buffalo Museum of Science
1020 Humboldt Parkway
Buffalo, NY 14211

National Annual Meeting

This will be held
October 20-22, 2000
at the Southwest Virginia
Higher Education Center.

A beautiful new facility
in Abington, Virginia.

A field trip to Meadowview's
two plantations will be
a feature of the meeting.

Watch for more details
in "The Bark!"



OUR 10th ANNUAL MEETING

And we're going to luxuriate in the Finger Lakes October 13, 14, 15. The beautiful setting of the Canandaigua Inn On The Lake, surrounded by glowing autumn colors and azure water, will put us in a festive mood to celebrate the accomplishments of the last 10 years and look forward to the next decade.

The usual interesting workshops, reports on research progress by Dr. Maynard and Dr. Powell, plus the never-know-what-they-will-come-up-with reports from the Directors, will be highlighted by an included early evening dinner cruise. The captain has invited anyone who can tear themselves away from their unique grape pie, to visit the pilot house of the paddle-wheel boat to take a turn at the wheel. Chip Leavy, Director of Host District 8, also is exploring various field trip possibilities.

Our featured luncheon speaker is Dr. Stephen Kresovich, Director of the Institute of Genomic Diversity and Professor in the Department of Plant Breeding at Cornell University. He formerly served as Laboratory Director of two U.S. National Germplasm System Repositories in New York and Georgia.

His research interests involve solving fundamental and applied problems of genetic resources and utilization. He will be speaking on Biotechnology and Biodiversity-Working Together, and will be discussing some of the high profile questions seen in the media. It will be stimulating hearing the bottom line, state-of-the-art information.

Watch for details in September and get your reservations in by the deadline. The Inn is expensive but the sister property, two minutes away, is not.

SEE YOU IN OCTOBER!

EXCELLENT EDUCATION PROJECTS SPREADING ACROSS NEW YORK

Cindy Murabito, a third grade teacher at Minetto Elementary School in Oswego County, has been active with our program for several years. This year her classes have raised over 150 seedlings: 23 seedlings are from a wild American chestnut tree from which they collected and stratified nuts last fall. Mrs. Murabito is helping start a special seed orchard on some local pastureland for the seedlings grown from the nuts collected from New York trees. Cindy was first introduced to our program when TACFNY member Joseph Castaldo sponsored her in the program. Mr. Castaldo just happens to be her father.

At the Farmers' Museum in Otsego County, Garret Livermore has teamed up with Amy Parr, a science teacher at Cooperstown Central School, to teach a very interesting project. Their students spend one week in an immersion project living and working in the year 1840. During this week some of their learning focuses on the American chestnut, including growing seedlings. They plant half at the Farmers' Museum and half go home with the children. They have started a database to study long-term tree growth with our trees. Since their project began, a 126 circumference chestnut has been found in reforested pastureland on museum grounds. They are sending a sample for identification, hoping they have found a pure American champion tree for the ACFNY annual Supertree competition.

In Broome County at the Finch Hollow Nature Center, Tom Tasber, Debra Smith, and Anna Kinney are responsible for a summer camp for students entering grades 3-6. They have an extensive learning program on area trees. Here, student interest is at its peak. As an activity in their program, families view an animated video, "The Lorax" by Dr. Seuss. They watch a wonderfully entertaining and animated story of an interesting character, the Lorax, who rescues

a fictitious species of tree, The Trufula, from extinction by planting and growing the seeds from the very last Trufula tree. The analogy to American chestnut restoration creates "tree-mendous" enthusiasm in people of all ages. During their time at summer camp, the children grow American chestnut seedlings and bring them home for their families.

In Westchester County, active TACFNY member Craig Hibben and Mary Jo Galloway

of 4H Youth Development at Westchester Co.-Cornell Cooperative Extension are working with the St. Joseph's and Daniel Webster Schools to raise seedlings for Foundation plantings. Some students are mounting horse chestnut leaves for comparison, to be used in a community education program.

Boy Scout troop #468 leaders Brian Engler and Mark Nowak are working towards a National Historic Trail Award with their troop. As part of their project, they are planting American chestnuts as a community event in Niagara County on the Historic Erie Canal in memoriam to the people who worked on the Erie Canal. They will be planting some seedlings grown in our local school programs.

We again congratulate Jeffrey Justin and Bryan Sharry, our many educational partners and members for your achievements and thank you for the great successes toward restoration of the American chestnut. Please keep us informed of your achievements.

DONATIONS NEEDED!

Donations are needed to support the valuable work of our education program. This year, please consider a donation to help develop our program so that it can support a greater number of teachers and new partners in our restoration projects.

TEACHING AND GROWING TIP

For American chestnuts to effectively reproduce, they must be planted in groups of two or more. Teacher Jeanine Sr. Justin recommends that when growing seedlings for children to take home, two nuts be grown in each half-gallon milk carton per child. When they cut the top off the milk carton, the top is unfolded, separated and taped to create a divider that is the perfect size to slide back into the milk carton from corner to corner, creating two long triangular compartments, one for each seedling. Children learn the importance of cross-pollination and are prepared to grow productive trees with their families.

In Memorium

Gertrude Bronson

Memorialized by

Elaine Irons, Carol Sanford
Cynthia Kiebalá

George Bowenberger

Remembered by Bill White

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

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U.S. POSTAGE

BUFFALO, NY
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10th Anniversary

MEMO FROM OUR SECRETARY/TREASURER:

Any Poets Out There?

Or at least jingle writers? We ought to have something fun to reminisce about for our 10th Anniversary, so can someone think of something appropriate? How about a song for a chestnut chorus to present at the Annual Meeting? *All* that has popped up so far are these lyrics sung to the tune of "The Bear Went Over The Mountain":

**Herb went over the mountain
Herb went over the mountain
And what did he see?
He saw a great big chestnut tree...etc.**

Surely we can do better than that. Put your thinking caps on and call us with your ideas. Also, let us know if you like to sing and would be part of a chorus if something develops.

716-745-7772

YES! I WANT TO HELP RETURN THE KING OF THE TREES TO ITS NATIVE FORESTS!

Enclosed is my membership support of

Gold Leaf (\$1000 or more) Silver Leaf (\$500) Bronze Leaf (\$250)

Green Leaf (\$100) Regular (\$40) Student (\$15) Other

Please make check payable to: The American Chestnut Foundation

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Telephone _____ email _____