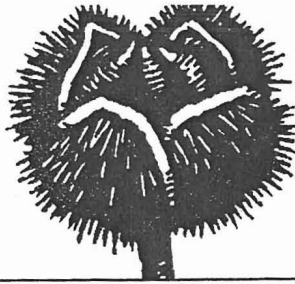


# THE BUR



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

Volume 13, No 1

Spring/Summer 2003

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

For the first time since TACFNY's inception, we have run into a serious problem with the financing for CESF Syracuse's program. The NYS grants, that TACFNY worked so hard to help get for the scientific program at CESF Syracuse, has been put on hold by the NYS government. CESF doesn't know if or when the grant will be restored. The program can continue until the end of August and by then we risk losing some of our most important scientific workers at CESF.

We need to raise \$100,000 to insure the programs continuing on the present schedule for the next year.

TACFNY Executive Committee met and agreed we need to make our first ever all-out membership fund drive to try to solve this problem. A mailing is being prepared at this time to accomplish this goal. Please be thinking of possible new sources of funds and report them to me by calling or e-mailing – Herbert F. Darling, Jr., 131 California Dr., Williamsville, NY 14221 / (716) 632-1125 / hdarling@hfdarling.com, so we can pursue them.

LONG LIVE THE AMERICAN CHESTNUT!

Herbert Darling, President



**PUNTING DAY AT ZOAK** This American chestnut seed orchard is located in the DEC's Multiple Use Area in Western NY's Zoar Valley. District 9 turned out more than 50 hard working volunteers to plant 128 seedlings and repair weather, deer and rodent damage. The seed orchard was established 10 years ago and contains over 800 American chestnut trees.

## SCIENCE REPORT

Researchers will have a busy summer.

The CESF team at Syracuse has sent an updated Pert Plan showing several exciting projections for goals leading to reforestation in 2009. To quote their notes, "If all goes well and enough resources are provided, 2006-2009 are the years when the American chestnut emphasis begins to move from research to restoration. Over these years we expect to produce 2-5 different transgenic American chestnut trees using different combinations of genes and promoters. We will use the field tests to determine the best transgenic American chestnuts for out-crossing and subsequent public distribution."

A construct with 3 resistance genes from natural sources such as wheat, a promoter, and a fluorescent marker will be available in June 2003. It will be used in both the tissue and the pollen work.

Heavy concentration will be focused on transformation during the summer. A dry run pollination procedure will be conducted by Dr. Fernando at Hieberg, CESF's plantation which has a permit. Volunteer field crews will be helping with control pollinations also according to planned and timed experiments.

The Illick greenhouse arrangements for flowering chestnut trees, to be used by Dr. Fernando for testing the protocol of pollinating with transformed pollen, is being worked on by Chip Leavy, Bill Snyder, John Gordon, John Ellis and Stan Wirsig with phone advice by Greg Miller. The installation of these trees is nearly completed thanks to many people.

*continued on page 2*

Herb Darling, NY Chapter President and John Spagnoli, former DEC director of Region 9 and TACFNY Board member, made a visit to the DEC office in Albany. They met with the new DEC director, their new scientific director, two foresters, and included Wayne Cooper, WNY DEC director by conference call. Wayne is a TACFNY board member, and monitors the 800 tree Zoar Valley plantation maintained by TACFNY.

Regulatory requirements, placing trees in the forests, and mutual cooperation was discussed. The DEC representatives were very interested and planned to visit CESF in Syracuse for more information on the research. This has been done and further consultation is being arranged.

Other fieldwork such as gathering fresh pollen at the necessary precise timing also is being planned.

It looks like a busy summer.

**TRACKING SEED ORCHARD DIVERSITY IN DISTRICT 3**

Frank Munzer, District 3 Director, reports they are receiving great help from the Institute of Ecosystem Studies in Millbrook, NY. Their greenhouse staff has grown 243 nuts to healthy American chestnut seedlings for spring planting. Frank delivered some of the seedlings to District 3's Weathersfield seed orchard and the balance to Craig Hibben for planting in the Lasdan seed orchard to replace trees lost to blight and deer damage.

Each container in which the seedlings were grown was coded and recorded to indicate and track the source and location or the nuts from which it came. Such detail will be valuable in the future when research-developed resistant pollen is available to help assure genetic diversity for long-term survival.

The coded breakdown of the 243 seedlings is as follows:

<u>Identification #</u>	<u>Quantity</u>
90023	50
40010	50
90002	100
73005	30
73001	1
Salem Wisconsin	12

(The first digit in the code indicates the District from which the seed came. The second digit indicates in which district a seed from a mature seed orchard tree was planted. The last digits indicate the trees' number in the seed orchard.)

**DISTRICT 4 IS ONE OF THREE SITES FOR MYCORRIZAL STUDY TO IMPROVE GROWTH OF AMERICAN CHESTNUTS**

Al Nichols, Director of District 4, is working with SUNY's College of Environmental Sciences' and Forestry (CESF) to test the fungi in the soil supplying sustenance to American chestnuts.

Tom Horton, Asst. Professor-Mycorrhizal Ecology and grad student, Kristopher Dulmer, both of CESF, will plant 150 seeds in the vicinity of grow-

ing wild American chestnuts. In the fall, the seedlings will be removed and their roots inspected to determine the most beneficial mycorrhizal fungi. These will be compared with results from two other NY sites. (District 7, Roy Hopke and District 9 Bill White) The objective is to find the best combination of fungi which can be added to the soil of newly planted American chestnuts for maximum growth.

Al also has discovered two American chestnuts, which are developing healing cankers around blighted areas. These two trees, five miles distant from each other, appear to have their blight fungus infected by Hypovirulence. As a result, the trees' natural defenses are overpowering the weakened fungal pathogen. Al will keep in touch with researchers at CESF and report his observations on the healing cankers. Al reports also, that his wife, Fran, is participating again in the Charlie Chestnut program with her 3rd grade class. Seedlings will be planted in Guilbert Lake State Park.



*243 American chestnut seedlings were grown for planting in District 3's seed orchards in the greenhouse of the Institute of Ecosystem Studies in Millbrook, NY. Each of the white cone-shaped containers was coded and recorded to indicate the tree and district of the nut's origin.*

## DISTRICT 6 WILL HOST TACFNY'S ANNUAL MEETING IN THE FALL

District Director, Tom Walker, has been busy spearheading arrangements for the Oct. 24-26 Annual Meeting at the Bonnie Castle Resort in Alexandria Bay, NY located on the St. Lawrence River. (See separate column for complete details)

Tom will be measuring an American chestnut for possible "Supertree" status along the north shore of Oneida Lake. He also plans to regenerate the Little seed orchard previously established at the Living Museum (Zoo). Harsh Watertown weather makes it difficult to grow seedlings, but once a half-inch in diameter they seem to be able to survive.

## DISTRICT 9'S ZOAR SEED ORCHARD EXPANDED TO OVER \$00 AMERICAN CHESTNUT TREES

In late April, according to Bill Snyder, District 9 Director, some 60 people turned out to plant 128 American chestnut seedlings in the extensive TACFNY seed orchard located in the Zoar Valley area. Repair to winter's extensive damage caused by deer and rodents was part of the maintenance task.

A three minute TV segment taken at the Zoar Valley Planting Day and covering the plight of the American chestnut was aired several times in the Outdoor segment of the Empire Sports Channel.

Bill also arranged for a TACFNY booth at "Plantasia" a four-day garden show sponsored by the Western NY Nurserymen's Assoc. Over 12,000 people attended and it was estimated that more than 500 stopped for information at the booth.

## WHO TO CONTACT! DISTRICT DIRECTORS AND THE COUNTIES THEY SERVE

### DISTRICT 1

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### DISTRICT 6

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Chemung, Genesee, Livingston, Monroe,  
Ontario and Orleans Counties

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Erie, Niagara, Wyoming, Allegany,  
Cattaraugus and Chautauqua Counties

**PUT OCTOBER 24-26  
ON YOUR CALENDAR  
IT'S A GREAT FALL  
GET-AWAY!**



*SEED ORCHARD MAINTANENCE is heavy work. John and Beverly Ruska team up to repair winter damage at tlze District 9 Zoar Valley seed orchard. It is volunteers like these that contribute their time for the ultimate restoration of tlze mighty American chestnut tree.*

## TACFNY ANNUAL MEETING October 24, 25, 26, 2003

We've never been North before for an annual meeting, so guess where we're going? Alexandria Bay! We will be at the Bonnie Castle Resort, which is noted for its spectacular views of the St. Lawrence River and the nearby historic Boldt Castle.

### THE RESORT

There are many activities available for the off hours (if you find any); indoor swimming pool, hot tub, sauna, batting cage, tennis, golf, museums, video game room, shopping, of course, including discounted Wedgewood, Waterford, and others.

A highlight will be a trip on the resort's paddle wheel boat Saturday afternoon cruising around the beautiful Thousand Islands and ending with a tour of the famous Boldt Castle. (It will be closed for the season, but they're opening it just for us.)

### THE PROGRAM

Friday evening, October 24 will be the usual setting up of exhibits, informal socializing as folks arrive and logging in of the Harvest Exchange nuts by Harvesters.

Saturday, Oct.25, starts off at 8:00 AM with registration, nibbling roasted chestnuts, and browsing the exhibits. At 9:00 AM promptly the business meeting will begin, including District Director reports. Drs. Maynard, Powell and Fernando of CESF in Syracuse will give their always-interesting research reports, and workshops will complete the morning.

Our District 6 hosts with Director Tom Walker are looking for some American chestnut trees nearby for a short field trip after lunch, and this will be followed by our cruise:

Since our site is "Up North", it seemed appropriate to focus on a theme of

growing chestnuts in a cold climate with any relevant aspects pertaining to growing chestnuts elsewhere. We are fortunate to have as our featured dinner speaker, well-known nurseryman Bill MacKently, owner with his wife Diane of St. Lawrence Nurseries in Potsdam, NY.

Bill is noted for his fascinating stories and nuggets of information brought from his extensive lore of chestnut knowledge and experience. Those who know him probably will be saying, "Bet he'll be coming up with a wild title for this." Title or no, we all look forward to listening and talking to him in October.

Member sharing will follow dinner, plus just plain relaxing and chestnut talking. Sunday morning there will be an open Board meeting with adjournment at noon.

### THE COST

Registration will be \$20 and a package deal is offered by the Bonnie Castle. It will include a 2 night stay, 2 breakfast buffets, 1 lunch, 1 dinner, and all taxes and gratuities, for \$132 per person, double occupancy. Reservations must be made by October 1 for this rate.

### QUESTIONS

If there are questions, call the Bonnie Castle at 1-800-955-4571 or Arlene at 716-745-7772, or e-mail [awirsig@localnet.com](mailto:awirsig@localnet.com). Watch for the registration form with more details in September.

Get together with your seldom-seen old friends and meet new ones; hear what's new, discuss your chestnut problems, have fun, and take the opportunity to air your ideas, all at TACFNY's Annual Meeting.

### DO YOU KNOW A PROSPECTIVE TACFNY MEMBER?

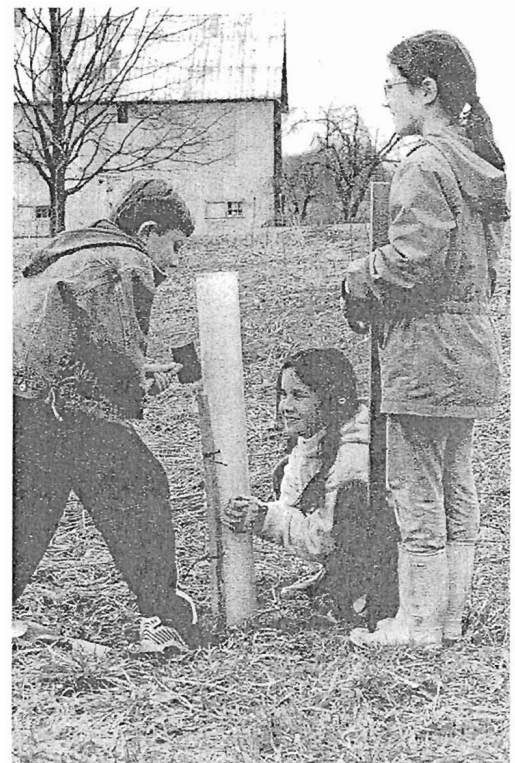
An application form for membership is included on the last page of this issue of the BUR. Please pass it along.

## FOOD NUTS OF THE IROQUOIS

(TACFNY Director, John Ellis, discovered the following American chestnut facts in a NY State Educational Bulletin)

Nuts formed an important part of the Iroquois diet. Great quantities were consumed during the nut season and quantities were stored for winter use. The nut season to the Iroquois was one of the happiest periods of the year, especially for the young people to whom fell the work of gathering most of the nuts. The women, however, often went in groups when serious business was meant, for with the failure of other crops, nuts formed an important food source. The nut season was called "o'wadawisa ho".

The favorite food nuts of the Iroquois were hickory and chestnuts, though other nuts were also valued. Chestnuts were boiled and the mealy interior used for puddings or the dried meats were pounded into flour and mixed with bread meal to give the bread flavor.



Children of members are enthusiastic "maintainers" at District 9's Planting and Maintenance Day.



## NOMINATIONS FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

If you know of a person who can lend their expertise to TACFNY's Board of Directors, please send your nomination with a brief resume to the Nomination Committee Chairman below. Among the areas of expertise might be: funding, public relations, genetic plant transformation, forest management, etc. Send nominations to: Jack Mansfield, Chair of Nominating Committee, 349 Roycroft Blvd., Buffalo, NY 14226.

## REWARDS FOR "SUPERTREES" CONTINUE

New, larger American chestnut trees that bear nuts or can easily be pollinated are essential for species-preserving genetic diversity.

As an incentive to forest owners, hunters, hikers and others to report qualifying trees, TACFNY is offering a \$100 reward for the first 10 American chestnut trees over 18"DBH and \$50 for the first 10 over 14" DBH. The trees must be in NY State, found during 2003 and not recorded previously by TACFNY. It is necessary that the property owner allow access for identification, pollination and/or seed collection.

For identification materials write for TACFNY's "Identification Bulletin" or visit the following websites: [www.acf.org](http://www.acf.org)



*"SUPERTREE" REWARD Jay Hager, center, of Afton, NY found a 15"DBH American chestnut tree qualifying him for a \$50 reward check. Presenting the check is Roy Hopke of Chenango Forks, NY, District 7 Director and Jim Donowick TACFNY Director from Deposit, NY. Mr. Hager donated the check to District 7 to assist in purchasing planting materials for District seed orchards.*

or the botany section of the Buffalo Museum of Science, [www.buffalomuseumofscience.org/bot\\_chestnuthtmlm/chkey.htm](http://www.buffalomuseumofscience.org/bot_chestnuthtmlm/chkey.htm).

To claim your reward, send a twig with a few leaves and, if possible several leaves from different areas of the tree to: Dr. Richard Zander, TACFNY, c/o Missouri Botanical Garden, PO Box 299, St. Louis, MO 63166-0299. If you have any questions please direct them to your District Director.

## DISTRICT DIRECTORS NEED ABLE ASSISTANTS

As with any on-going organization, leadership continuity is vital for its long-term management and to fulfill its mission. It will be no different for TACFNY.

TACFNY has nine NY State multi-county Districts, each headed by a Director, some of whom are assisted by a helpful core of volunteers. Assistants for the District Directors are necessary to learn the "ropes" and provide vital leadership continuity. Most Districts are large and needs are expanding. We anticipate moving into new activities such as blight-resistant pollination and eventually, restoration.

So now is the time for all good members to come to the aid of their Districts. Please contact your District Director and ask how you can help.

## NEWLY FOUND "SUPERTREE" FALLS JUST SHORT OF NUMBER ONE

A big three and one-half inches separates our current NY State "Supertree" from a new rival, now in second place. Tom Karpovage from the Town of Tonawanda reported a "Supertree" contender owned by Kevin Kayne on his property near Seneca Lake. The new tree measures 20.1" DBH. The largest, located at St. Lawrence University, measures 24.6" DBH.

## SELECTING "MOTHER" TREES

TACFNY has over 55 seed orchards of more than 20 trees each. When blight-resistant pollen is available, it is vital to pollinate the right trees for health, genetic diversity, etc. Basic criteria is being developed for evaluation by volunteer in each District. A database system has been in place since 1996 for tracking orchard trees and their offsprings. Frank Munzer, District 3 Director, is spearheading an update survey of the orchards and an expansion of the data base system. Please contact your District Director to help in this evaluation.

## AND NEXT...LONG-TERM EVALUATION

Doug Campbell, a TACFNY director, has taken on the task of long-term evaluation of research-developed blight-resistant trees in our seed orchards. He has suggested two studies he feels are essential to maximum success of the restoration program, both over a 25 year period; the length of time necessary for growth to timber size.

One study emphasizes timber quality, free from grain distortion caused by the blight. It envisions a study of survival rates over 25 years as: "it would tell much of the story about the 'forms' of blight resistance".

The other study is intended to select trees for their ability to self-propagate. As Doug says, "nut production should be precocious, regular and heavy if self propagation is to be achieved...".

Nuts from American chestnuts with the best of both characteristics....quality and propagation...would be emphasized in restoration goals. Doug's recommendations are in review.

The Bur  
The 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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# THE BUR

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

**IF YOU HAVE FRIENDS WHO ARE INTERESTED IN  
OUR GOAL OF RESTORING THE AMERICAN CHESTNUT,  
PLEASE GIVE THEM THIS APPLICATION.**

## Membership Application

Enclosed is my  
membership support of:

- Gold leaf, \$1000
- Silver leaf, \$500
- Bronze leaf, \$250
- Green leaf, \$100
- Regular, \$40
- Student, \$15
- Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Special Gift to NY
- State Chapter \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is an additional contribution in the amount of  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ in support of the New York State chapters: activities.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

This is a gift membership from: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership includes subscriptions to *The Bark* and *Journal of the American Chestnut Foundation* and enrollment in the New York State Chapter. The Chapter publishes the *Bur*, helps guide research at CESF, and includes nine Districts for local involvement in maintaining the American chestnut gene pool. Please make check payable to: The American Chestnut Foundation, PO Box 4044, Bennington, VT 05201-4044. TACF is a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization. Except for the member services portion of your contribution (valued at \$15), your gift is tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law.