

# Chestnut Tree

The Pennsylvania Chapter of  
The American Chestnut Foundation



**PA-TACF Contact Information:**

Penn State University  
206 Forest Resources Lab  
University Park, PA 16803  
Phone: 814-863-7192  
E-mail: mail@patacf.org  
Website: http://www.patacf.org

## Spring Meeting Scheduled for Saturday, March 19

**Meeting Date:** Saturday, March 19

**Location:** Milton B. Hershey Environmental Center, Hershey, PA.

**Time:** 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

**Suggested Donation:** \$10 (lunch and breaks)

Join us at the Annual Spring Grower and Member meeting for a casual day of chestnut education, food, and camaraderie. We'll have a chestnut breeding and restoration update, present our annual *Grower of the Year* award, pick the first annual raffle winner (see page 4 for more information), and feature some great speakers.



Dr. Beth Brantley, Penn State Mont Alto

Dr. Beth Brantley, Instructor of Forest Technology at Penn State Mont Alto will present "*What grows in the woods where chestnuts once grew?*"



Dr. Mike Marshall, Shippensburg University

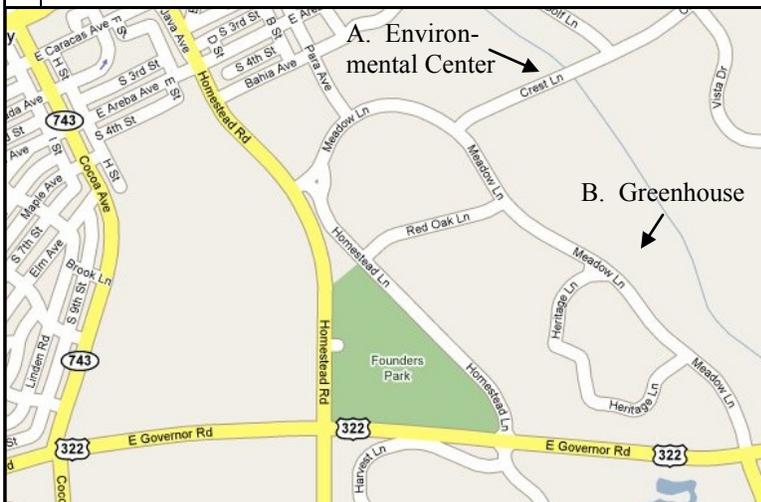
Dr. Mike Marshall, Associate Professor of Biology at Shippensburg University will discuss the results of inoculating fruits and vegetables in his talk on "*Cryphonectria. Goes to the Supermarket*":

This meeting is a great venue for both new and old chestnut growers to share what tools and methods work best in the field, and ask questions.

Don't forget to pre-order your grower supplies from Tim Eck (teck11@embarqmail.com) and chestnut seed from Sara (sff3@psu.edu). Supplies will be available for pick up at the Horticultural Center greenhouse (B in the map below) at the end of the meeting.

**Directions to our Spring Growers Meeting:**

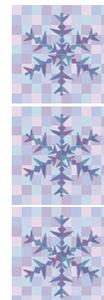
1. From US 322, turn onto Meadow Lane
2. Continue on Meadow Lane to for .05 mile to Crest Lane
3. Turn right on Crest Lane to Environmental Center.



**In the event of a snow emergency, please call the Leffel Center at 814-863-7192 for an update.**

The best way to keep informed is to join the PA-TACF E-mail listserv. Send an e-mail to [PA-TACF-subscribe-request@lists.psu.edu](mailto:PA-TACF-subscribe-request@lists.psu.edu)

Snow Date is March 27 if the meeting is cancelled





## President's Corner

By Tim Eck

*... imagine a puddle waking up one morning and thinking, 'This is an interesting world I find myself in - an interesting hole I find myself in - fits me rather neatly, doesn't it? In fact it fits me staggeringly well, must have been made to have me in it!' This is such a powerful idea that as the sun rises in the sky and the air heats up and as, gradually, the puddle gets smaller and smaller, it's still frantically hanging on to the notion that everything's going to be alright, because this world was meant to have him in it, was built to have him in it; so the moment he disappears catches him rather by surprise.*

— Douglas Adams

As I assume the presidency of PA-TACF, I see some things evaporating like the puddle in Douglas Adams' analogy. Just as the American chestnut evaporated from a world seemingly designed for it, so have people's jobs and 401Ks as well as government and foundation grant money. Private foundations heavily invested in the markets have seen their principles halved so that grant funding in the short term would be devastating to their endowments. Similarly governments are torn between curbing unnecessary spending and increasing spending to stimulate the economy. Either way they look, grants for non-profits are low priority.

The state of the economy has created a large yearly deficit for PA-TACF in

2010 for the first time. So I would like to ask everybody to think of how you can help out.

We have recently received a greatly appreciated anonymous \$10,000 grant, so things are beginning to look up. But you are probably asking yourself how you can help too. Three possibilities come to mind – donations, fund-raising, and grant writing.

**Some of us might be able to make donations**, especially those in the Marcellus shale regions. If you find yourself in a situation where this makes sense for you, then please do! I would also like to establish a matching pledge drive for those who like to leverage their money. If anybody wishes to help establish this fund, please email me at [teck11@embarqmail.com](mailto:teck11@embarqmail.com) or call me at 717-684-2078. I would especially encourage the board to participate. It doesn't take any up front money - just the willingness to commit to match other donations up to your pledged level.

**Some of us may be able to stage a fund-raising event.** If you know someone with expertise in event-planning or fund-raising, this may be the thing for you. TACF president Bryan Burhans is behind this 100%, especially in the form of a branch event. He explains this is the best way to raise money while publicizing the foundation and immediately increasing membership; and it has certainly worked for the Turkey Federation. These local branch events typically involve speakers, a dinner, socializing, and an auction of donated goods from local merchants and craftspersons. All attendees receive a membership as part of the ticket price. It takes a lot of organizational work but you may be pleasantly surprised how much wider appeal there is to



2010 House Rock orchard (Lancaster County) volunteers.  
**This year's planting weekend will be on April 8 and 9.**

chestnut restoration when it is couched in terms of shopping and partying instead of planting and mowing.

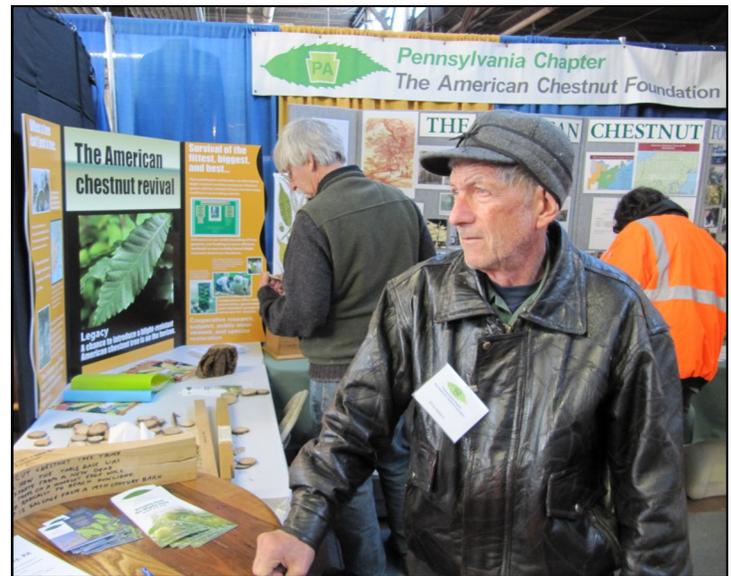
**Grant writing is another possibility.** If you work for a company with a private foundation or know someone who does, this may be for you. Also, there are numerous private foundations and community foundations unrelated to commercial ventures that will accept grant proposals. It is important to understand that grant writing is a long term project. Unless you know someone in the funding organization, expect your grant proposal to be turned down the first time or two it's submitted. It is about establishing familiarity and credibility, not necessarily about the virtues of the project.

If I hadn't started this president's corner off with a fund-raising drive and an imaginative Douglas Adams quote, I would have started it off by thanking Alex Day for his dedication and service the last two years as well as the board and staff. Sara and Sue have forgone their usual bonuses the duration of the recession while working harder than ever. And now Alex takes on the responsibilities of the Past President which include nominations, so contact him at [fforaday@aol.com](mailto:fforaday@aol.com) if you would like to serve. I also want to thank Don McCann for stepping up to the VP position without having served on the board.

That all the growers and volunteers are appreciated goes without saying – they are the reason that all the rest exists. PA-TACF members have contributed a vast amount of work and expertise to American chestnut restoration over the years. I am continually amazed when I learn of a new orchard I hadn't known about or when I need an answer on a topic and realize one of our members is an expert on the subject. Probably Sara comes the closest to comprehending the totality of PA-TACF, but I will try to gain a better understanding in order to serve as president and try to help others communicate and build.

*And, if you enjoyed Samuel Taylor Coleridge in high school English class, be certain to read Douglas Adam's best book ever, "Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency" for the rest of the story about "The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner".*

Thank you to Little Schuylkill Conservation Club for continuing to promote chestnut restoration with their annual chestnut waffle fundraiser and information in their newsletter.



Alvin Jackson promotes the work of PA-TACF at the Pennsylvania Farm Show in Harrisburg, PA

## SAVE THE DATES: 2011 CHESTNUT RESTORATION BRANCH EVENTS SCHEDULED

- **May 7, Carlisle:** A new **Cumberland Branch** is forming and planning an pig roast at the Two Mile House in Carlisle on **May 7**. Contact Susan Smith at [connect@longacre.com](mailto:connect@longacre.com)
- **June 11, Clarion:** A new **Western Woodland Owners Branch** is planning an event at the Freeman Farm on **June 11**. Contact Gary Micsky at [gwm6@psu.edu](mailto:gwm6@psu.edu) for details.
- **June 17, Sewickley:** The **Sewickley Branch** is planning their second event in the Pittsburgh area. If you live in the Pittsburgh area and want to attend the event or help out, contact Thad Jones at [shparkranger@comcast.net](mailto:shparkranger@comcast.net)
- **September, Petersburg:** The **Raystown Branch** is looking for new committee members for its event, planned for **September** 2011, in Petersburg, PA. Contact Lori Krause at [tacf-branch2@comcast.net](mailto:tacf-branch2@comcast.net) or 814-643-2372.

If you would like more information on the events, or would like to put one together in your area, contact the Leffel Center at 814-863-7192. Thank you for supporting local chestnut restoration projects.

## Raffle to support PA-TACF and Chestnut Restoration

### Drawing: March 19, Hershey, PA

Buy a raffle ticket and support PA-TACF and local American chestnut restoration projects.

Tickets are \$1 each or 7 for \$5.

The drawing will be held at the spring meeting on March 19. Winner need not be present to win.

Tickets are available by calling the Leffel Center at 814-863-7192, or email us at [mail@patacf.org](mailto:mail@patacf.org) to reserve your tickets. Centre County License # 3297.



**FIRST PLACE PRIZE:** Hand-crafted American chestnut table donated by member Chris Ditlow.

**SECOND PLACE PRIZE:** Hand turned American chestnut bowl donated by member Dr. Jim Finley.



## New Jersey News from Ron Farr

Hello from wintery NJ. The United Nations designated 2011 as the International Year of Forests. Here's to hoping that the American Chestnut takes a huge step forward to becoming part of the Eastern forests again. This may be a good year to market the American Chestnut Foundation to the masses.

This past summer, volunteers from across New Jersey and Pennsylvania came out to help inoculate and measure cankers at the Stokes State Forest and Lark Nursery plantings. More measurements are to be done this year, so we hope to see you there!

The number of Americans from local seed sources at the State Nursery has grown to about 75. They are protected behind an extensive deer fence which is necessary anywhere in New Jersey. Many thanks to Joe Battersby and Tony Rosati for their efforts.

Reports of American Chestnuts continue to trickle in from around the state. Site visits in the Spring will include visits to trees in a Mercer County Park and several along a powerline in West Milford in Passaic

County. We are hoping they are outside the clearing zone of those lines, keep your fingers crossed that they are still there in April.

There is some debate as to whether the Champion American Chestnut in New Jersey is an American after all. A spring trip will confirm if the tree is an American. So keep your eye out for large trees that you know of as we may have to find a new champion for the Big Tree List.

I have been speaking to anyone who will listen about the American Chestnut being listed as an threatened or endangered plant in New Jersey, as the viable breeding population is less than 20 and the many sprouts are being devoured by deer, to me it should be listed. Imagine New Jersey has four times more breeding pairs of Bald Eagles than American Chestnuts, yet they aren't listed. Just a thought.



If you would like to volunteer at an orchard event this spring, contact Ron Farr at [farrforest@yahoo.com](mailto:farrforest@yahoo.com) or Tony Rosati at [ar728@comcast.net](mailto:ar728@comcast.net).



## Volunteer Spotlight: Jeff Krause



Jeff Krause in action at Raystown Lake

We proudly present member Jeff Krause in the volunteer spotlight this issue. Jeff is a wildlife biologist for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Raystown Lake, Huntingdon, PA. Jeff manages the American and CMS BC1 orchard at the Army Corps of Engineers site at Raystown Lake, which will eventually also contain Graves BC3F2s.

Jeff was instrumental in securing a grant to expand fencing at the orchard, build a well, a storage shed, and create outreach materials and a chestnut education kiosk at the Lake Raystown visitor center.

Jeff also started the first Raystown area branch event with his wife, Lori, which resulted in bringing 76 new members aboard and a generated a new enthusiasm in the local community to support chestnut restoration. Jeff assists with plantings at the PSU orchards and encourages Juniata and Army Corps interns to get “experienced” by coming up to plantings, inoculations, and measurements at PSU. Jeff is also helping to pilot the new chestnut learning box, and uses his involvement in many like organizations to give chestnut presentations. Thank you Jeff, and welcome to the PA-TACF volunteer spotlight!

### What do chestnut growers do in the winter? We go to the Farm Show!

Lee Saufley (right) tells a visitor about the TACF breeding program.



Member Don Franks tells some press interns about the PA Chapter at the Farm Show in Harrisburg, PA. Don, like many volunteers, worked two days at the show.

Thank you volunteers: Ethan Habrial, Chandis Klinger, Mike Webb, Grayson Starner, Bob Meiser, Dave Armstrong, Tom Pugel, Tim Eck, Bob Summersgill, Don McCann, John Detz, Dylan Jenkins, Susan Smith, Alan Tumblin, Lee and Jean Saufley, Linwood Starner, George Perry, Alvin Jackson, Jim Walizer, Sara Fitzsimmons, Peter and Juliet Lane, Lionel Lemery, Alex and Sandy Day, Vicki Brownell, Mike Waldron, Jim Egenrieder, and Chris Ditlow. More than 1000 membership brochures were distributed during the week.

## Seed protection methods

by Sara Fitzsimmons

During the Chapter's fall meeting in Mercer, PA, several questions were asked about how best to protect seed for outplanting. Though no one method is completely foolproof, there are several ways to plant a nut, some which work better than others.

At this point, neither I nor the Chapter can recommend any of these methods. Instead, they are presented here for you to know that they are being tried and, in some cases, the success – or, in many cases, lack thereof. To begin, we can really think of categorizing the types of protection into a few categories, physical, chemical, and none.

**NONE**: One of the arguments against protection of planted nuts is that nuts in nature have no protection. That's true, and might work with a few certain goals and in a few specific circumstances. In nature, the amount of seed produced works to overwhelm the predator base – the squirrels, chipmunks, deer, turkeys, humans, etc., etc. So, you'll need a lot of nuts!! Ultimately, if you want to be sure that the nut you planted in a certain spot will stay in the spot and germinate, this is not the method for you.

**PHYSICAL**: The most commonly employed strategy for outplanting of chestnuts, both in the nursery and with direct seeding, is using a physical barrier. One of the first recommended protection methods for direct seeding of chestnut was one that used a tin can around planted nuts as promoted by the USDA. In TACF, a majority of direct-planted seeds are protected, then, with a cylinder of aluminum flashing or short plastic tree shelter, mimicking the action of the tin can.

Several disadvantages of this method, especially using a plastic tree shelter, involve both the expense and labor required to install and, eventually, remove the materials from around the tree. Those disadvantages have, as can be expected,



Blair Carbaugh stands behind a 2-year old American chestnut tree in his orchard. Note the plastic tree shelters held by a fiberglass post.

increased interest in a better way of planting, including seedling plantings and, as will be discussed later, chemical protection of the nuts.

Seedling planting is also not without its shortfalls, but we'll save that for another discussion. Of greater connection to this article is getting the seedlings started. In the nursery bed, chestnuts are typically planted inches apart in a raised nursery bed. The nuts are usually planted in the fall but can also be started in the spring. Snow fencing or some other sort of tight fencing is then placed on top to prevent predation of the planted nuts.



Tight spacing of planting holes and a raised nursery bed await chestnut seed at PAGCs Howard Nursery.

**CHEMICAL**: Using chemicals to protect planted seeds or nuts is not necessarily a new idea but a successful method for chestnuts has not yet been developed. In 2003 and 2004, then PA-TACF Chapter president Tim Phelps tried several trials with concentrated habanero extract. Tim used a commercial product which, even if not diluted, did not evade predation. Of course, we can't know if the nuts were eaten – they may have been dropped somewhere or re-cached – but they didn't stay where they were planted.

As with any innovation, though, necessity continues to beg for invention and these types of protection continue to be evaluated. In the spring of 2010, MD-TACF Chapter president Gary Carver and long-time member Tom Scrivener tried a mixture of capsaicin, Bitrex, and alcohol.

Tom found that soaking the seeds in alcohol for more than 15 minutes killed the seeds. Gary started with a mixture of 40ppm of capsaicin in alcohol, but all seeds were eaten. Gary then tried a mixture of 400 ppm capsaicin in alcohol, and all the seeds were eaten. Finally, Gary gave up w/ measuring and used a "heaping teaspoon" dissolved in alcohol – the seed were not eaten, but also didn't germinate. The experiment will need to be retried!

So, in the spring of 2011, Gary and Tom will be trying varying mixtures of capsaicin, Bitrex, "Squirrel Stopper" spray, hot pepper wax animal repellent, eucalyptus oil, citronella, and garlic oil. We'll await their results with "baited" breath!

## New Chestnut Learning Box Available for Educational Events



In the past, our chapter outreach volunteers would have to “wing-it” at events targeting school-aged kids, who often times would lose interest at static displays.

Thanks to the Maryland Chapter of TACF, the countless hours of the volunteer TACF Education committee, the chapter is pleased to announce the creation of the first chestnut learning box available for loan to PA and NJ members for use at events or school-use.

According to the Learning Box materials, written by Dr. Gary Carver: The “American Chestnut Learning Box” is a learning box designed to enable users to explore American chestnut trees from many different perspectives.

Instructors in a classroom can use a learning box to pass around objects that students can touch and examine. Presenters can use learning box resources to illustrate information initially presented in a lecture. Workshop leaders can interact with participants to examine the resources and discuss topics related to the items in the box. The only limit to the use of a learning box is the imagination of an educational leader and the interest of his or her audience. A learning box can be used with learners of all ages.

The core physical items in the box are laminated leaves, dried burs and nuts, samples of American chestnut wood, and sections of American chestnut stems with cankers. Other items could include, for example, leaves, burs and nuts from Chinese chestnut trees, and pieces of other kinds of woods.

Besides the key topics of the history and economic significance of American chestnut trees and the story of the blight fungus, topics can include invasive species, parasites, fungus properties, wood properties, and tree characteristics. Other possible topics are hypovirulence and backcross breeding. Additional topics are suggested in the printed and dvd materials.

To request the Learning Box for your event, call the Lefel Center at 814-863-7192. We are hoping to have more boxes available for loan in the future.

To learn more about the box’s contents, or to create one for yourself visit: <http://www.mdtafc.org/learningbox.html>



One of the many Graves’ orchard canker measuring crews: Rick Entrekin, Joe Basil, Sue Oram, Amanda Powell, Alvin Jackson, Sara Fitzsimmons, Brendan Wilson Dave Sorg, and Shawn Wood. Photo courtesy of Rick Entrekin. Three different crews came out in the heat of the summer to measure canker growth after inoculations that will be used against molecular data to find the keys to resistance.. .Thank you!



Board member Jim Walizer gives grower advice at PA-TACF’s Fall Meeting in Mercer, PA. Congratulations are due to Jim and Libby Walizer for winning the 2010 Maurice K. Goddard Award for Forest Sustainability.

**Pennsylvania Chapter**  
**The American Chestnut Foundation**

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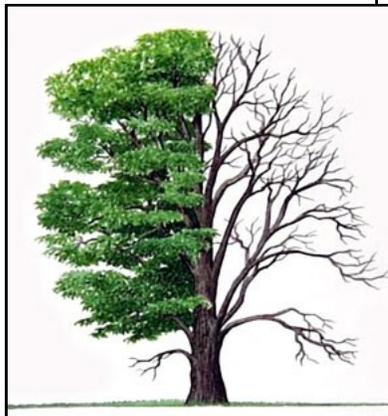
**The Chestnut Tree Newsletter**

**In Memory of member**  
**Donald W. Barger**  
**July 15, 1928-September 9, 2010**

Don Barger was a long time TACF and PA-TACF member, whose house and farm had a view of Chestnut Ridge in western Pennsylvania. Don was passionate about the American chestnut and he shared his memories with many. Don sent TACF a beautiful handwritten essay a couple of years ago—about growing up in an era when all family members had to work to survive. One of his chores was to cut dead chestnut trees on the farm to keep the wood stove burning and the house warm.

Don also co-wrote and illustrated *The American Chestnut and the Zig Zag Split Rail Fence* with Dr. Bill Lord, which appeared in the Spring 2008 Journal of the American Chestnut Foundation which can be accessed on-line at:

<http://www.acf.org/journal.php>



**Chapter Calendar - 2011**

- February 5: Northern Appalachian Restoration Meeting, Sewickley, PA
- February 12: New England Restoration Meeting, Portsmouth, NH
- March 19: PA-TACF Spring Meeting, Hershey, PA
- March 19: PA-TACF Board Meeting, Hershey, PA
- April 8-9: Planting event at Lancaster County Conservancy, House Rock orchard.
- May: Cumberland Branch Event at the Two Mile House in Carlisle, PA
- June 11: Western PA Woodland Owners Branch Event at the Freeman Farm, Clarion county
- June 17: Sewickley Branch Event, Sewickley, PA
- August 16-18: Ag Progress Days, Rock Springs, PA
- September: Raystown Branch Event, Petersburg, PA