

Chestnut Tree

The Pennsylvania Chapter of
The American Chestnut Foundation



PA-TACF Contact Information:

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PA-TACF Fall Meeting

On Saturday, October 16, the 2004 PA-TACF fall meeting will be held in the township of South Park, PA, an area approximately 10 miles due south of Pittsburgh. The meeting will take place in the Home Economics Building on Buffalo Dr. (see directions to the right).

Registration for the meeting will start at 8am continuing to 8:45, at which time we will start the meeting. The cost of the meeting will be \$5 — a steal!! — and will include lunch, as well as the following intriguing chestnut-related activities:

SPEAKERS - We are quite lucky to be able to present to you the following authorities:

William MacDonald is a professor of Plant and Soil Sciences at West Virginia University. Bill will be speaking on his work with hypovirulent strains of the blight and on their application to controlling blight in forested situations, primarily the West Salem stand in Wisconsin.

Ross Rogalski will be speaking on the topic of “MidWest Chestnuts: Resource for Restoration”. Ross has tracked down and pollinated several large chestnuts throughout the midwest, chestnut which range in size from 36” to 50” in diameter!!

Bill Lord will be presenting on “From Blight to Burnham”, an overview of the American chestnut’s history in the US detailing the events from the destruction of the species to the efforts that have been instituted to restore the species.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Learn something new about chestnut breeding and culture! This year we will have concurrent breakout sessions on topics including: chestnut identification, cytoplasmic male sterility, backcross breeding techniques, and chestnuts 101 (a course designed for newcomers to the TACF program)

MEMBER SHARING

Learn from other PA-TACF members about how they grow and breed chestnuts.

FIELD TRIP

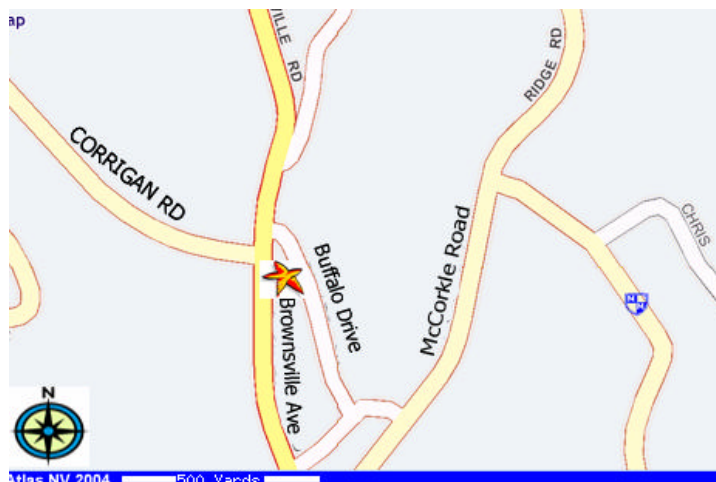
At the end of the meeting (approximately 4pm), we have a field trip scheduled to the South Park chestnut orchard. Several hundred third backcross hybrid chestnuts from the Clapper source of resistance were planted in 1999 and 2000 at this orchard.

DIRECTIONS

From Pittsburgh: Take State Route 51 South. After approximately 6 miles, take the South Park ramp. Take a slight left onto Brownsville Road, and then take a left onto Buffalo Drive.

From the East on PA Turnpike: From the Turnpike, merge onto Interstate 70 West. Take I-70 to Route 51 North toward Pittsburgh. Take the South Park ramp. Take a slight left onto Brownsville Road, and then take a left onto Buffalo Drive.

Signs will be placed along Corrigan and Brownsville Roads. You’ll recognize the area if you see a large stadium, across from which will be located the South Park Administration Building and the Home Ec. Building.



PITTSBURGH - Plan to spend a couple of extra days in the Pittsburgh area. There is tons of stuff to do and see one of Pennsylvania’s largest cities. Tour the Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens, check out the rivers and new stadiums, or visit the city’s zoo. We will provide visitor information at the meeting.



Calendar of Events:
Harvest Season: late September-early October
PA-TACF Board meeting: October 15, Pittsburgh, PA - Schenley Park Visitor’s Center
PA-TACF Fall meeting: October 16, South Park, PA
TACF Annual meeting: October 29-31, Asheville, NC
Pennsylvania Farm Show: January 8-15, Harrisburg, PA
Planting Season: late March - early April

Someday We'll Find It, That Chestnut Connection

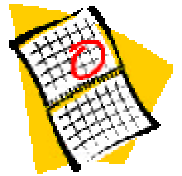
- Sara Fitzsimmons

What particular tie binds this newest issue of The Chestnut Tree together? In the next few pages, I'm looking to follow the theme of "update". The past few issues have been devoted to looking forward and presenting new and groundbreaking information as well as instructional information. But, it's been a while since we've talked about the breeding program stats. You'll find that update on pages 6 and 7. Since we're right in the middle of our Board Elections, we'll also cover information concerning the organizational structure of your TACF chapter.

After reading through this issue, I hope you have a good understanding of what we've done this past year and beyond, and of the work that's still to be done. No matter what your background, PA-TACF has many different activities where you can learn something new and help out our efforts. We look forward to having you at any number of our events, and hope that you will be a part of our next round of updates!

But, before you go any farther into this issue, I'll go ahead and give you a *bonus* update: Did you know that PA-TACF had two interns working for the chapter this summer? One intern, Bill Gallup, is a current student at Duke University's Nicholas School of the Environment. He assisted in inoculation and pollination activities across the state. The other intern, Adam Karl, is a current student at Bowdoin College in Maine, assisted in pollination activities and orchard management. We were lucky to have both of them and hope to procure the help of more interns next summer. In the next newsletter, we will have stories from both interns detailing their experiences with the chapter over the summer.

TACF Annual Meetings Schedule



Year	Dates	City	Location
2004	October 29-31	Asheville, NC	Biltmore Estate and Holiday Inn SunSpree
2005	October 28-30	Lexington, KY	Marriot Griffengate Hotel
2006	October 20-22	Abingdon, VA	Meadowview Research Farms
2007	<i>tentative</i>	Vermont	Shelburne Farms

And, speaking of meetings, our chapter scientist, Dr. Robert Leffel, will be presenting a paper at a meeting sponsored by North Carolina State University and the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO).

The meeting, covering the topic *Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding in the Age of Genomics: Progress and Future*, is being held in the beginning of November. Dr. Leffel will spread the word on chestnut breeding by giving his talk on *Strategies for Breeding Blight-Resistant, Timber-Type Chestnuts*



Many, many thanks to everyone who assisted with pollination and inoculation activities this year!! Without the help of volunteers like you, this project would not be possible. And many thanks to the many unnamed persons who assisted in locating trees, procuring bucket trucks and providing emotional support. We hope you'll all come out for the harvest and for next year — we've got even more work to do in 2005!

* Travis Anderson * Dave Armstrong * Jim Bellis * Christine Biser * Frank Brouse * Dick Buyers * Dan Cain * Blair Carbaugh * Mary Carbaugh * John Carlson * Samantha Carpenter * James Chestnut * Denise DeDerardi * Jeff Dice * Jim Diffenderfer * Steve Dodge * Donald Dorn * Eugene Dougherty * Joe Duganich * Emma Eck * Livy Eck * Timothy Eck * Al Eelman * Ron Farr * Josh Flad * Don Franks * Susan Frey * Judith Gallagher * Bill Gallup * Gary Gilmore * Jodie Gribik * Jeremy Hamilton * Bill Hartnett * Donald Harver * Jim Hill * Hylton Hobday * Alvin Jackson * Karen Jameson * Adam Karl * Carolyn Karl * Barbara Knapp * Joe Lankalis * Dave Lazor * Ann Leffel * Bob Leffel * Bruce Levine * Chin Lin * Bruce Loverock * Chin Lin * Bruce Loverock * Kathy Marmet * Timothy McKechnie * Bill Montague * Dean Nelson * Larry Patchel * Bill Peifer * George Perry * Peter Pinchot * Joe Planinsek * Tom Pugel * Alex Reinke * Jean Saufley * Lee Saufley * Annette Schlageter * Ruth Schurr * Mike Shashala * Paul Sisco * Ron Sloane * Mike Smith * Jane Soan * Ann Sorg * David Sorg * Len Speis * Robert Strasser * Rick Supanick * Sabrina Taylor * Scott Tomlinson * Alan Tumblin * Michelle Upton * Stacey Upton * David VanDuren * Phil Varndell * Mary Vogel * Richard Westlake * Robin Wildermuth * Jim Wykoff * David Yale *



Help with grants

- 1: Would you like to help out PA-TACF in a more direct way?
- 2: Do you have experience in grant writing?
- 3: Would you like to gain some experience in grant writing?

Join in the efforts of members like **Fred Roberts** of Punxatawney who was vital in procuring a **\$50,000** grant with support from PA House Majority Leader **Samuel H. Smith**. Thanks for all of their hard work and support.

Please contact **Larry Patchel**—co-chair of the Grants Committee for more information:

Phone: (412) 824-5019

E-mail: lcpatchel@cs.com

WANTED PA-TACF needs equipment to help manage orchards across Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Do you have equipment that you'd like to donate to the chapter for use at one of the over one hundred orchards? We need equipment ranging from bulb planters and landscape fabric to sprayers and tractors. If you can help the chapter in this realm, please contact:

Bob Summersgill
phone: 908-647-5864
E-mail: rgsummersgill@juno.com

MEMORIES OF AMERICAN CHESTNUT TREES

-by *Stanley Yancis*

In 1925, when I was 3 ½ years old, our family moved into the country in Northeast Pennsylvania. When I got out of our friend's Model T Ford, the first thing that caught my attention was a huge whitish-tan skeleton of a tree, just a few yards from where I stood along the driveway, across the barn. The one foot in diameter hollow stubs a yard long that were once limbs reached out from both sides of the tree. In my fertile imagination, it looked like a monster reaching out to grab any passerby.

Years later I learned the trunk was over two feet in diameter.



CHESTNUTS OF THE GARDEN (state)

The Pennsylvania Chapter has been hard at work trying to establish plantings and volunteer activities in the state of New Jersey. The first pollinations led by the PA Chapter occurred in the state this summer. Led by our fearless president, **Bob Summersgill**, two trees around the **Wanaque Reservoir** were pollinated with Chinese chestnut pollen in order to create a regionalized male sterile F1 generation.



Earlier in the year, two new chestnut orchards were established in New Jersey. Working with the **Morris County Parks Department**, an F1 orchard and an American test plot were established in two areas of Morris County.

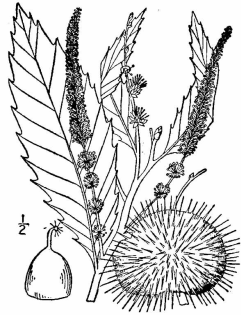
Continuing our relationship with the **New Jersey Conservation Foundation**, we also established several test plots on the "Jarboe" property near Stockton, NJ. These test plots were created in order to determine the suitability of the site for a potential BC3F2 orchard using Graves resistance source material. Like the BC3F2 orchard produced at **Penn State's** University Park campus, the Jarboe BC3F2 orchard will eventually contain thousands of our hybrid trees of which only 1.5% will be selected and retained to create the blight-resistant American population that will be used to reforest the eastern US.

At a recent meeting held in conjunction with the New Jersey Conservation Foundation, the chapter made a great connection with retired Rutgers professor **Dr. John Kuser**. Dr. Kuser has worked with TACF in the past and was excited about continuing a relationship with the organization. We look forward to continuing a dialogue with him and **Rutgers University** in the hopes of establishing orchards in New Brunswick and beyond in the Garden State.

When it started to lean, my father and a neighbor cut it down for firewood. Just a tap with an axe send the split piece of wood flying.

Because chestnut wood split straight and easy, it was ideal for split rail fences. There were several sections of sheep fence on our farm that were used for fence posts to fence in our cattle where Dad decided to partition areas into pastures. Untreated, the wood lasted for 20 or 30 years.

(Continued on page 8)



A Tree By Any Other Name

Over the years, our beloved American chestnut has been through more name changes than Prince. It may be of interest to you, our readers, to know of the evolution of the species' classification:

1785 - *Fagus Castanea dentata*, Marshall, Arbust. Amer. 46

1800 - *Castanea dentata*, Borkhausen, Handb. Forstbot, i. 741

(1896 - Sargent, Situa N. Amer. ix. 13, tt. 440, 441)

(1905 - and Man. Trees, N. Amer. 220)

1803 - *Castanea vesca americana*, Michaux, Fl. Bor. Amer. ii. 193.

(1838 - Loudon, Arb. et Frut. Brit. iii. 1984.)

1836 - *Castanea americana*, Rafinesque, New PL iii. 82

1864 - *Castanea vulgaris*, y. *americana*, A. De Candolle, Prod. XVI. 2, p. 114

1889 - *Castanea sativa*, var. *americana*, Sargent, Garden and Forest, ii. 484

Picture courtesy of USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913. Illustrated flora of the northern states and Canada. Vol. 1: 615.

Keep your eye out for the next issue of the Journal of the American Chestnut Foundation in which PA-TACF Chapter Scientist Dr. Robert Leffel will have published an article. Writing with TACF Regional Science Coordinator Paul Sisco, the article will cover the finer points of Cytoplasmic Male Sterility and how it pertains to a breeding program that can yield a blight-resistant American chestnut.



Do you have an idea for a newsletter article?

If you have a topic you'd like to see written about, or would like to write an article yourself, simply contact Sara Fitzsimmons by e-mail at sff3@psu.edu or by phone at (814) 865-7228.

Pennsylvania Chapter Organizational Structure

By now, I'm sure all of you have received your ballots for the upcoming Board member elections. We were blown away by the participation last year and hope that we receive the same input from you this year.

With the elections underway, we thought it would be a good idea present to you, our members, a quick summary of our organizational structure and a listing of the current board members.

The Pennsylvania Chapter is organized under the IRS rules as a 501 (c) (3) non-profit and incorporated in the state of Pennsylvania. We have our own Executive Board and Treasury.

Members of the Board participate in making decisions concerning the direction of the organization, including educational and scientific enterprises, and play key roles in raising money for the organization (i.e. through the grants committee).

Your votes in the current election will be voting three new members onto the board, as well as a new vice president (who will then become president for the 2005-2007 term).

Here are our current board members:

Name	Position	Term
Bob Summersgill	President	2003-2004
	Past President	2005-2006
Tim Phelps	Vice President	2003-2004
	President	2005-2006
Phil Gruszka	Past President	2003-2004
Blair Carbaugh	Board member	2003-2004
Lee Saufley	Board member	2003-2004
Greg Yochum	Board member	2003-2004
Frank Brouse	Board member	2004-2005
Tracey Coulter	Board member	2004-2005
Chandis Klingler	Board member	2004-2005

Latest Administrative Development: At the last PA-TACF Board meeting, the directors elected Lancaster County member Timothy Eck to take over the position of chapter treasurer. We thank him for taking on this responsibility and offer our full support of his efforts!

Voting for the 2004 election will be closed on September 30. Please mail in your ballots in as soon as possible.

Results of the election will be announced at the fall meeting.





MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

David Lazor, Sr.

Jefferson Co.

Our Steps along the Chestnut Journey

Getting started early 2003

It was a call to action early in the Spring of 2003 from Gary Gilmore, Jefferson County, PA Service Forester and PA-TACF County Coordinator, that got us started. Gary suggested that we try controlled pollinations with Jefferson County chestnut trees. Even if we failed, at least we might learn something and do better next year.

In April, my son and I sacrificed a day of trout fishing to help Gary plant chestnuts at the TACF Stewart/Smith Research Farm in Jefferson County, PA.

I volunteered to help at the TACF Meadowview Research Farm in Virginia the first week of June last year; this year, 2004, I helped during the second week of June. This was a great hands-on, learning experience working with Dr. Fred Hebard and staff.

In Jefferson County during July 2003, we bagged and pollinated 3 trees. Female burs were scarce and development was later than normal. We only placed 19 bags. While doing this we discovered at least 50 more Americans and 20 Chinese chestnut trees in the county. We harvested a total of 50 controlled polli-

nated BC3 nuts, 310 open pollinated Americans, and 1 CMS nut.

Expanding effort 2004

In early April this year, we planted the first BC3 nuts from the Fall 2003 harvest at the Stewart/Smith Farm.

This year, 2004, based on our collective learning and discoveries, we bagged and pollinated 7 trees, for a total of 353 bags, using eleven different pollens. This year the female burs were extremely abundant, and the male catkins and female burs were ready several weeks earlier.

Getting support

With Gary's many contacts we were able to get the much needed support and cooperation from Clear Creek State Forest, the State Game Commission, and Moshannon State Forest Bureau of Forestry. The Moshannon Team provided a bucket truck and over 10 years of experience. In addition, this year we also asked and received the services of a second bucket truck from the United Electric Co-Op. Our thanks goes out to our supporters; we couldn't have done it without them.

Question ... Are we going to make a difference?

Come the end of September, we ought to learn if we did any good this year; and if we're making a difference on the journey to restoring blight resistant American Chestnuts back to Penn's Woods. Longer-term, I guess we just need to have plenty of faith, continuously learn, and let future generations determine the answer!

*David Lazor, Sr. is a PA-TACF member who lives in Ohio and travels all over Pennsylvania to assist the chapter in many different activities. Dave encourages any newcomers with questions about how to get started in this chestnut business to contact him:
E-mail: dlazorsr@ameritech.net*

H e l p o u t a t H a r v e s t t i m e

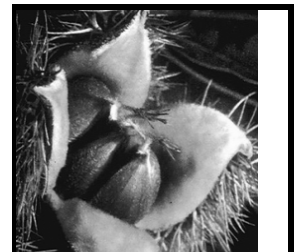
Don't forget that harvest season is quickly approaching. At last check, the burs on the trees were plentiful and quite large! We should have an exceptional amount of chestnuts this year — a banner year to be sure.

SAVE ROOM IN YOUR REFRIGERATOR!

Bring your packed seed to the fall meeting. We will then store the seed in Hershey, PA where it will be kept until the following spring meeting, when seed will be distributed for the year's plantings.

If you'd like to help, we have trees all over the state from which to harvest both open-pollinated and controlled pollination nuts. There's sure to be one near you!

Contact Sara if you are interested in volunteering in this activity.
Phone: 814-865-7228
E-mail: sff3@psu.edu



Are We There Yet?

TACF Regional Breeding Program

This is where the chapter started. The advanced hybrid orchards (BC3, BC4, and BC3F2) all contain material that derived from stock developed at TACF Research Farms in Meadowview, VA.

Within this program, we have two sources of resistance, called Graves and Clapper. Our goal was to create 20 genetic lines of each source of resistance, where a line would consist of approximately 100 trees derived from one American chestnut parent and one advanced hybrid parent.

The BC3F2 generation is the next to last generation in our breeding program, and we planted that generation over two years ago. Those first of those trees were created at Meadowview. Then, in 2003, we planted Pennsylvania derived material.

We are well on our way to fulfilling a full nine replications (1350 seed!) of one line of BC3F2's created from Pennsylvania derived stock. In the next issue, a full explanation of this generation will be given.

CMS Regional Breeding Program

Within the past few issues of *The Chestnut Tree*, you have read quite a bit on the development of breeding in PA-TACF that works to take advantage of a genetic anomaly known as Cytoplasmic Male Sterility.

Currently, we have 22 locations where CMS based material has been planted, and we have already reached the first backcross generation at 3 of those locations. Our goal is to eventually plant a CMS orchard in every county of Pennsylvania and at least two in New Jersey. We still have a long journey ahead, but we've made significant progress every year. Let's keep it up!

Pollination Season 2004

This years pollination season was quite successful! Although I'm not one to count my seed before my burrs open, reports from around the state point toward what should be a bumper crop of chestnuts.

This year, we created several different generations of chestnuts, ranging from controlled crosses of wild American trees, first generation (F1) crosses, first backcross generation (BC2), third backcross (BC3), and the first inter-cross generation (BC3F2).



All of these crosses required an enormous amount of effort and

Seed Type	Seed Collected	Number Planted*	Number Dead
American	31131	4836	1623
BC1	747	961	176
BC1F2	1	1	0
BC2	475	557	246
BC2F2	1672	1672	1021
BC3	9261	8669	3256
BC3F2	1203	1108	64
BC4	458	329	87
Chinese	2034	465	178
European	100	25	21
F1	3235	1264	502
Japanese	200	56	20
TOTALS	50517	19943	7194

**Some seed collected is not planted. Major factors leading toward this are losses in storage, using seed for genetic experiments, or non-germination of seed in a greenhouse when planting seed lots as seedlings.*



Inoculations

In early June, we participate in one of the most vital aspects of the breeding program, that of inoculation. The process is that by which we determine the resistance of our hybrid trees. A small amount of the blight fungus (called inoculum) is placed into a tree and the subsequent reaction is evaluated. Those trees with the best reaction are then selected and used in further breeding. In 2004, we inoculated at 5 different locations for a total of 239 trees! Next year, we should have close to 800 trees to test.

2005 Scheduled Locations:

Codorus State Park, Riegelsville, Moshannon State Forest, Ober, PSU - Kuhns, PSU - Arboretum

Check the map of PA-TACF's orchards on page 7 to find an orchard near you. And then make some time in your calendar to participate in 2005!

Notices will be sent out in the next newsletter, but because of the weather dependent nature of the activity, dates cannot be pinned down until about 1 month in advance.

And, even then, postponements do occur.

The best laid schemes of trees and breeders gang aft a-gley!

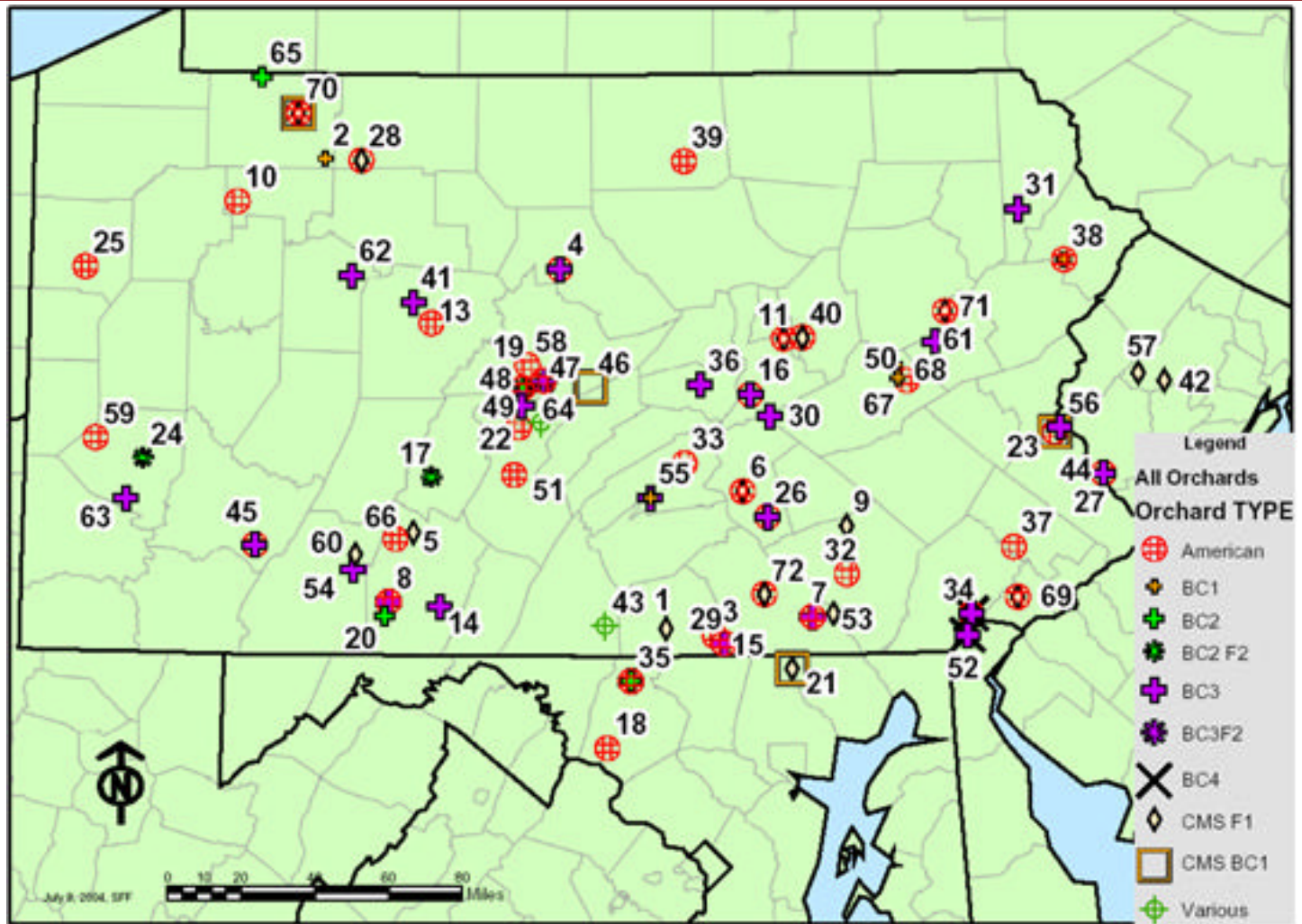
thanks again go out to everyone who participated. Here is a quick tally of what went on where:

Total Number of Counties Where Trees were used: 23

Preliminary count of crosses: 98

Now, we just wait! Wish us luck during harvest season!

PA- TACF Chestnut Orchards



No.	Farm_Name	City	No.	Farm_Name	City	No.	Farm_Name	City
1	Yohe - Adams County	Gettysburg	26	Hummlestown	Hummlestown	50	Quakake	Quakake
2	Allegheny NF	Tionesta	27	Jarboe	Stockton	51	Raystown Lake	Hesston
3	Armstrong	Hanover	28	Kane	Kane	52	Red Clay	Hockessin
4	Beech Creek	Beech Creek	29	Kelley-Amherst	Hanover	53	Reed Run	Martic Twp
5	Blue Knob	Imler	30	Klingerstown	Klingerstown	54	Reels Corner	Reels Corner
6	Boyd Big Tree Cons,	Middle Paxton	31	Lake Ariel	Lake Ariel	55	Reineman	Landisburg
7	Brogue	Brogue	32	Lancaster County	Lancaster	56	Riegelsville	Riegelsville
8	Buffalo Mills	Buffalo Mills	33	Longacre	Newport	57	Schooley's Mtn	Julian
9	Camp Mack	Brickerville	34	Longwood Gardens	Kennett Square	58	Sengle	Julian
10	Campbell	Tionesta	35	Merle Thorpe	Thurmont	59	Sewickley Heights	Sewickley Heights
11	Carbaugh	Danville	36	Middleburg	Middleburg	60	Shade Sportsmen	Cairnbrook
13	Clearfield	Clearfield	37	Mill Grove	Audubon	61	Silver Ridge	Weatherly
14	Clearville	Clearville	38	Monroe	Snydersville	62	Smith	Coal Glen
15	Codorus State Park	Hanover	39	Montague	Liberty	63	South Park	South Park
16	Dornsife	Dornsife	40	Montour Preserve	Danville	64	Stone Valley	Stone Valley
17	Duncannon	Duncansville	41	Moshannon SF	Pennfield	65	Sugar Grove	Sugar Grove
18	FoxHaven	Jefferson	42	Mount Paul		66	Sweet	Alum Bank
19	Gamelands 176	State College	43	Mt. Alto	Mt. Alto	67	Tamaqua HS	Tamaqua
20	Gamelands 48	Buffalo Mills	44	Bruce	Stockton	68	Tuscarora SP	Barnesville
21	Gratland	Shane	45	Ober	Stahlstown	69	Tyler Arboretum	Media
22	Hemlock GS Council	Cottage	46	Penn Nursery	Spring Mills	70	Warren	Warren
23	Heritage Conservancy	Durham	47	PSU - Arboretum	University Park	71	White Haven	White Haven
24	Highland Park	Pittsburgh	48	PSU - Graves	Rock Springs	72	Windcliff	York
25	Hissom	Mercer	49	PSU - Kuhns	Rock Springs			

**Pennsylvania Chapter
The American Chestnut Foundation**

691 Pumping Station Road
Hanover, PA 17331-8608

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
State College, PA
Permit No. 234

The Chestnut Tree Newsletter

(Continued from page 3)

We found several patches of chestnut trees on our land. In the fall, my two brothers and I challenged each other to pick up the prickly-hulled nuts with bare hands. It could be done, we learned, by not putting too much grip in our grasp. But – our supply of nuts dwindled, as most of the new trees died of blight when they reached the diameter of 4 or 5 inches.

We country kids scared the dickens out of our city cousins. One time we took them out for a walk on a windy day to a place where two dry hollow chestnut trees (about a foot in diameter) had fallen against each other and leaned into a live tree. When the wind blew, the rub of the two dead trees would send an ungodly scream up and down the hollow. “What was that? What was that?” they asked in frightened voices. We replied, “What was what?” pretending we heard nothing. Then when we pointed out the source of the noise, they just couldn’t believe it.

A great horned owl apparently was aware of the acoustics of a hollow tree. For many years at dusk, it perched on a 20 foot tall stub of a huge 40 foot high hollow chestnut tree trunk and called to its mate on our side of the valley. Not only could we distinctly hear the hoots, we could also feel the vibrations in our ears and bodies. A common sight and aid to hunters were fallen chestnut trunks (18” or more in diameter and 30’ or 40’ tall) stretched out on the ground. A sound thump on a tree trunk with the heel of a shoe or boot often sent a hidden rabbit out through an open knot-hole or hollow stub. Year after year we got rabbits at the same logs

which we called our permanent sitting places. The hollow trunks were ideal shelters from small animals in inclement weather, especially when there was snow on the ground.

We heated our home and did our cooking for many years with the firewood from these great old trees. Chestnut that had died of blight was a great source of kindling as well. It split easy and even in winter was always dry and burned rapidly. Right up to WWII, when I went into service, we had an ample supply of kindling wood and fence posts cut from chestnut limbs. But, shortly after I returned from my 3 ½ years of duty, a standing chestnut, green or dry, was hard to find.

About 20 years ago, I saw an article in our newspaper about someone in Wisconsin (I believe) who was growing American chestnuts. I sent for 5 or 6 and planted them on the farm. One survived and grew to 7 inches at the base. I was hopeful it would not get the blight, but three years ago it died. Since I’ve been interested in chestnut trees since childhood, I’ve been planting hardier Asian-American stock for about 8 years that I’ve purchased from various seed catalogs. Some are starting to flower, but have borne not nuts as yet. Perhaps they are not close enough together for pollination, and since there are no more wild honeybees in this area, I keep filling in the spaces to have the trees closer together. Hopefully, in time I’ll pick chestnuts again, but this time with gloves on.

The author is a member of PA-TACF and lives in Wilke-Barre, PA