

# The Bur

Newsletter of the Virginia chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation

FALL 2011

VOLUME 5 NUMBER 2



## Woodland Theme Gala & Branch Celebration Help Chapter Equip the Price Research Laboratory & Renew Equipment at Meadowview

This year's chestnut celebrations were a pertinent reminder that times are never too tough to show up for the right cause. Across the state supporters found innovative ways to get together and push research forward enjoyably. Results were practical and immediate.



Guests get into the auction action before dinner at the Northern VA fundraiser held at Ayrshire Farm. A recital capped the gala evening.

First up on April 2 was A Sylvan Affair, hosted by organic farmer and chestnut benefactor Sandy Lerner at her showcase Ayrshire Farm in Loudoun County.

The gala drew 130 guests from hunt country to hear French soprano Celine Ricci, dine on home-produced food, and bid on an eclectic selection of donated items that ranged from a spring turkey hunt, art works, and beach resort getaways to a breeding pair of llamas with award winning wool.

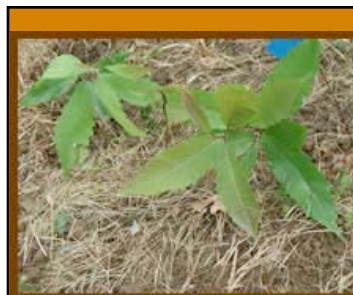
The net proceeds of almost \$50,000 were earmarked to equip the Price Laboratory and the replacement of farm machinery at Meadowview.

At evening's end willing guests went home with a pair of newly sprouted B3F3 trees after signing a germ plasm agreement to protect and report on their Restoration chestnuts under local growing conditions.

Monica Appleby, chair of the two year-old Southwest Restoration Branch headed their second event this year after a sensationally successful dedication, dinner and festival to mark the completion of the Price Research Lab at Meadowview last Fall.

This year's celebration, held on April 30, netted \$2000 which was promptly used to donate a block of 100 Restoration trees to Abingdon's local arboretum.

In June, Restoration Branch members worked with local Master Gardeners to landscape the lab with native plants; and a rain garden to control runoff from the building is next on the agenda.



**Data Matters!!!**

Proud Restoration chestnut owners who have worked through this year's challenges should access [acf.org](http://acf.org) to get a reporting form before year's end, or call TACF at 828 281-0047.

## Volunteers + Local Schools, A Winning Combo for Chestnuts

Stories that fall on young ears can make a real difference. This spring the Arbor Day speaker at The Hill School near Middleburg was Board member Cathy Mayes . The next Saturday chapter volunteers manned a display to mark Loudoun County's official observance on the school grounds .

The interest generated led the 6th grade to volunteer their services to open burs from this year's backcross harvest.. So students and science teacher Lois Johnson-Nead bused to the Marshall office on Friday, October 7 for a lesson in persistence and scientific record keeping as the plump nuts were wrestled from their spiny hulls and carefully catalogued. Their

efforts were especially important because this crop is expected to complete the Virginia chapter's first goal of creating 20 breeding lines from the Graves source of resistance to fill new orchards east of the Blue Ridge next year.



Nearby in Warrenton, the 5th grade Ecology Club at PB

Smith Elementary School honored TACF efforts to restore American chestnut by making a \$100 donation to the National office, the proceeds of a raffle of their hand print tree quilt made to celebrate the International Year of the Forest. The quilt was hung in the school lobby before the forest fundraiser, where literature about TACF's efforts drew interest and additional donations from parents, students and other teachers. Club advisor and teacher Barbara Dennee is an Old Rag chapter Master Naturalist, who first heard about the chestnut story at a chapter presentation by...you guessed it, Cathy Mayes. *(photo by Chrissy Snedecker)*

### Not To Be Missed on Your Fall Color Tour

The Mill Mountain Garden Club in Roanoke has become a new champion of the American chestnut since they collaborated with our chapter and the City of Roanoke to plant a mini- grove of five Restoration chestnuts last October. The new plot is part of their master plan for reforestation of Roanoke's own mountain which contains parklands and the city's zoo.

A year later, correspondent and member Forrest Moore reports that the trees were thriving, having put on 18 inches of growth despite record heat and rain.

The club has gotten funds for an amphitheater nearby, to be dedicated this October 20, where outdoor education programs can gather more support for their and our restoration efforts.

An award-winning wildflower garden that was

the club's first major project in the 70's covers two and a half acres at the top of Mill Mountain and is connected by a walking trail through city parkland to the zoo. What better way to spend a Fall afternoon on a foliage tour.

Mill Mountain tree yields first fruit



## Despite Snow, Record Heat & Rain, Four Newest Orchards Filled Partnership Proves Crucial in 2011 Season of Weather Extremes

With active partners, staff and volunteers hard at work early in this weather challenged year, Regional Scientist Katy McCune reported that VATACF's four newest orchards were filled this Spring with the planting of 738 nuts and trees .

Fortune's Cove, in Nelson County, is now our largest single orchard with 674 trees planted in two years.. Porter's Dam Orchard, Old Whitewood and Stonybrook are also at capacity. The first planting of the season, on a test tract owned by Georgia Pacific, took place February 24 with snow on the ground.



Close collaboration with the Virginia Department of Forestry proved to be a boon for both organizations this year. When record rainfall just before harvest posed its own challenges, a DOF bulldozer had to drag the department's bucket truck



Sweet Success: Katy McCune, Mike Tabony, Chris Bayliss, Wayne Bowman & DW Munn finish.

up a muddy track in Lesesne State Forest, and keep it hitched in order for volunteers to safely access VATACF's four native parents to collect this season's crosses.

And harvest was late. In Greene and Nelson counties it was delayed until the first week in October. Burs from crosses made in central Virginia for the state agency and the foundation were opened Tuesday, October 11 at the Virginia Department of Forestry headquarters in Charlottesville.

Hopes were high that there will be enough nuts germinating in the Department's refrigerators to start two new orchards planned with landowners for the 2012 season.

We increasingly depend on our [vatacf.org](http://vatacf.org) website to reach all our members and interested supporters throughout the state, particularly when timely updates to our Schedule of Events arises. This Fall we hope that all members who are unsure if they can attend the Annual Meeting will access the website to read our Board nominee profiles in full and send in a proxy by November 4 so your votes count.



## Dedication of Chestnuts at Virginia State Arboretum: A Lesson in Biology

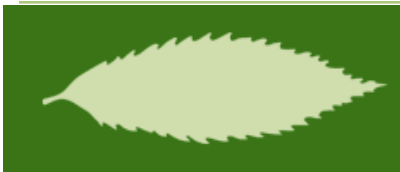
The Virginia State Arboretum and Blandy Research Farm is celebrating its 25th Anniversary this year. The facility is home to our largest research orchard in the north of the state, 500 young trees in two plots on the extensive grounds. Thanks to record rainfalls and great care, some of the three year-old trees have topped five feet and produced their first burs. They were a draw for visitors to Arbor Fest on October 8th and 9th.

On November 8th two more chestnut will join them, the first dedicated to Arboretum Board member Marian Lobstein. Prof. Lobstein is a founding member of the Virginia Native Plant Society, an eminent botanist and inspiring teacher recently retired from the faculty of Northern Virginia

Community College. Like the good botanist she is, Prof. Lobstein wanted to point out that *castanea dentata* requires another tree to be fruitful... so she is dedicating the second one in honor of her husband George Lobstein.



Blandy orchard backcross tops 5 feet in three seasons



The American Chestnut Foundation  
Virginia State Chapter  
PO Box 158, Marshall, VA, 20116



**5th Annual Meeting of VA Chapter  
Saturday November 12th at 1 pm  
Blacksburg Community Ctr, 725 Patrick Henry Dr.  
Blacksburg, VA**

Chapter Elections & Annual Report  
**Cathy Mayes**, Chair & **John Scrivani**, President

Chestnuts and Mine Reclamation- **Dr. James A. Burger**,  
*Garland Gray Professor of Forestry & Soil Science Emeritus, Virginia Tech*

Chapter Science Report - **Katy McCune**, TACF Regional Science Coordinator

3:30pm

Virginia Tech Campus Tree & Horticultural Gardens Tour  
led by **Dr. John Seiler** meets at the Duck Pond Gazebo

Please reply to the Virginia office at [vachestnut@verizon.net](mailto:vachestnut@verizon.net) or 540 364-1922



Some people really change the way things are done. **Dr. James Burger**'s entire career has been focused on researching how healthy forest ecosystems operate, and how resource industries can learn to foster them for the mutual benefit of men and the natural world we depend on.

Best known for his tireless and successful efforts to reform mine reclamation techniques, his Powell River project is gathering data of the best techniques of soil preparation and post planting care so that mixed hardwood forests can be re-established to mitigate damage caused by mountaintop mining.

His work at Virginia Tech in connection with the federal and state forestry and mining agencies has been recognized nationally. He will update us on the progress of the first hardwood plantings to include chestnut on mined lands in Virginia.



**Richard Olson** retired to Southwest Virginia after a career spent at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee, analyzing environmental data involving plant and atmospheric CO2 interactions, acid rain impacts in the US, and worldwide forest productivity.

Since 2006 Dick and his wife Gail have become active volunteers at TACF's research farms and instrumental in starting the Southwest Restoration Branch to help equip the new Price Research Lab.

They handled publicity for two Chestnut Restoration Celebration events at the farm, and this Spring brought fellow Master Gardeners on board to plan and install a native plant garden along one side of the lab. Their latest project.. to install a rain garden to control runoff from the facility footprint.



**Keith Carson** has transferred his research skills to every aspect of his new environment since moving to the Blue Grass Valley in Highland County after 25 years as a bio-medical researcher at Duke, Harvard, and Old Dominion University.

From directing the Norfolk school's biomedical PhD program and the Electron Microscopy Lab, he has shifted focus to take an active role, volunteering with a baker's dozen local and national conservation organizations and the VA Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries. Birds, plants, and their interactions with a world that we greatly influence are his passions.

Keith and his wife Polly Newlon, live off the grid in a solar and wind powered house near Snowy Mountain, in an area known for its American chestnut survivors.

**Please Join Us** in a beautiful town close to Virginia Tech to learn of this year's accomplishments, and our future plans in your area. **If you cannot attend**, please look over these profiles of VATACF Board of Directors' nominees. You can access our website, [vatacf.org](http://vatacf.org), to print and **return your proxy ballot to us at VATACF PO Box 158, Marshall, VA, 20116 by November 4.** Otherwise you may cut and enclose this proxy form, choosing two Board candidates from among those nominated.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Member since \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

I cast my vote for the following to serve on the VATACF Board of Directors until the Fall of 2014.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_ or, I authorize the presiding officer to cast my ballot Nov.12. \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated: \_\_\_\_\_