Our Mission:

Restore the American chestnut tree to our eastern woodlands to benefit our environment, our wildlife, and our society.
The American chestnut was once one of the most important trees in the Eastern forest. In the heart of its range a count of trees would have turned up one chestnut for every four oaks, birches, maples and other hardwoods.

Chestnut was so abundant on the dry ridge tops of the central Appalachians, their canopies were filled with creamy-white flowers in early summer; the mountains appeared snow-capped.
And the trees could be giants. In virgin forests throughout their range, mature chestnuts averaged up to five feet in diameter and up to one hundred feet tall. Many specimens of eight to ten feet in diameter were recorded, and there were rumors of trees bigger still.
American chestnut was an important wildlife food source, forming a staple for such animals as wild turkey, ruffed grouse, bear, and many other wild and domestic animals.
The range of greatest dominance in the United States stretched from Maine to Georgia. The tree is now native to southern Ontario, and some researchers believe that until the late 1800s it may also have been present in northern Florida.
The tree was one of the best for timber. It grew straight and often branch-free for the first 50 feet. Loggers tell of loading entire railroad cars with boards cut from just one tree. Straight-grained, lighter in weight than oak and more easily worked, chestnut was as rot resistant as redwood.
Chestnut was an extremely important commodity for early settlers of the Appalachians.

The nuts were used for food, mast (wildlife food), and as a cash crop. The wood was used for virtually everything - telegraph poles, railroad ties, shingles, paneling, fine furniture, musical instruments, even pulp and plywood. In the South, the bark and wood were also used for tannin extraction.
Then the chestnut blight struck
First discovered in 1904 in New York City, the blight - an Asian fungus to which our native chestnuts had very little resistance - spread quickly. In its wake it left only dead and dying stems. By 1950, this keystone species disappeared on some nine million acres of eastern forests had disappeared.
The blight is caused by a fungus, *Cryphonectria parasitica*, introduced from Asia.

Blight enters the tree though the cracks typical of chestnut bark and through wounds. It forms a canker and quickly girdles the tree.
THE AMERICAN CHESTNUT FOUNDATION

TACF has been working for 30 years to develop a blight-resistant American chestnut tree.

Our goal: To restore the American chestnut to the eastern forests through a scientific program of breeding and cooperative research. Recent developments in genetics and plant pathology promise new hope that this magnificent tree will again become part of our natural heritage.
To make this promise a reality, a group of prominent scientists established The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF) in 1983 as a non-profit organization. The mission is simple; to restore the American chestnut as an integral part of the eastern forest ecosystem.

Original organizers and supporters included Nobel Prize-winning plant breeder Dr. Norman Borlaug, Dr. Peter Raven, Director of the Missouri Botanical Garden, independent chestnut researcher Philip Rutter, and the late Dr. Charles Burnham, the eminent Minnesota corn geneticist.
Our goal is to produce trees that will be indistinguishable by experts from pure American chestnut trees.
Meadowview Research Farms
In 1989 TACF established a research farm in Meadowview, Virginia. A second farm was donated in 1995 with initial planting in 1996, and a third farm purchased and planting begun in 2002. Today at Meadowview, more than 30,000 trees are in the ground at various stages of breeding, maintained by six full-time staff; two scientists, a research technician, a field technician, a mechanic, and a farmer.
TACF’s chapter network extends throughout the natural range of the American chestnut.

- Alabama
- Carolinas
- Connecticut
- Georgia
- Indiana
- Kentucky
- Maine
- Maryland
- Massachusetts/Rhode Island
- New York
- Ohio
- Pennsylvania/New Jersey
- Tennessee
- Virginia
- Vermont/New Hampshire
- West Virginia
Chapter volunteers find and pollinate mother trees and establish and care for chestnut orchards. Assistance from utility companies often provides bucket trucks for pollinations.
A Win-Win Situation: Land Reclamation Projects

Its rapid growth, high quality wood, and exceptional wildlife properties makes the American chestnut the most viable choice for reforestation projects.

A former mine in Kentucky slated for reforestation.
Courtesy of Mike French

A reclaimed hillside orchard.
The American Chestnut Foundation depends primarily upon its members to support research to develop a blight-resistant American chestnut tree. Currently, over 5,500 members are helping to bring this important tree back from the brink of extinction.

In 2011, Charity Navigator, a non-profit watchdog group in Mahwah, N.J., rated The American Chestnut Foundation four stars, its highest evaluation of not-for-profit corporations accepting financial contributions from supporters for the fifth year in a row.

Charity Navigator determined that TACF spends most of its revenues on program expenses.
PARTNERSHIPS
In addition to that of our members, TACF has earned the support of and partnerships with groups such as:

• The USDA Forest Service
• The National Forest Foundation
• The National Science Foundation
• The Norcross Foundation
• State Forestry Agencies
• Office of Surface Mining
• Natural Resources Conservation Service
• National Wild Turkey Federation
• National Park Service
• Quality Deer Management Association
Become a Member!

With you help, we will return the American chestnut to its native woodlands.

As a member of The American Chestnut Foundation you will receive...

- The Journal of The American Chestnut Foundation, our bi-monthly scientific and cultural magazine.
- Membership in one of our state chapters
- Access to expert advice on growing and caring for American chestnut trees.
- Opportunities to participate in local breeding and research activities.
- The opportunity to purchase American chestnut seed and seedling kits.

Please visit www.acf.org or call 828-281-0047 for more info.
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The Pennsylvania State University,
University Park, PA

New England Regional Office
USFS Northern Research Station,
Burlington, VT

Mid-Atlantic Regional Office
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