



The TREE URCHIN

Newsletter of the Maine Chapter of the
American Chestnut Foundation



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Spring 2009

The Mission of the Maine Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation:

- A. *To protect, conserve, preserve and propagate trees from all-important remaining native Maine American chestnut populations in the state.*
- B. *To restore American chestnuts to a place of ecological and economic importance and self-sustainability throughout their original forest range in Maine.*
- C. *To make blight-resistant American chestnuts available to the people of Maine as soon as possible.*

President's Letter

The news just keeps getting better as we work to develop highly resistant sixth generation B3-F3 American chestnut seeds. The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF) Distribution Committee, of which I have been the chair for the two years it has been in existence, recommended last fall that we allocate 1000 seeds from the Meadowview Research Farm Orchard in VA to the members who have maintained the longest continuous TACF membership. In this first round, we selected the top 200 members and offered them 5 seeds for a \$20 cost for shipping and handling. These B3-F3 seeds will be mailed out in late March. A copy of the current Distribution Policy and Plan is enclosed in this issue.

In Maine we have one individual who will receive this offer—Dr. Garold Thumm of Auburn, Maine, a retired professor from Bates College. He has elected to donate his seeds to the Maine chapter. These seeds will be grown in a greenhouse and the seedlings will be planted later on this year. Eventually, we hope to plant them on land owned

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Austin Jones

When Austin Jones passed away on January 15, 2009, the Maine Chapter lost one of its most dedicated Chestnutters. We will remember him with a most appreciative nod for his tireless energy devoted to so many chapter endeavors and steadfast belief in the foundation's work in bringing back the American chestnut.

After retiring from the CIA in 1981, Austin moved to Union with his wife Norma where they bought 25 acres on Seven Tree Pond, built a house and developed many gardens and plantings over the years, including a stand of American chestnuts. He was active in the community, donating time to such efforts as the Conservation Commission, the Water Advisory Committee for Aqua Maine and the Union Historical Society. He was the area's coordinator for Maine Audubon's annual Loon Count and volunteered with the Appalachian Trail Club.

Ever since his first association with the Maine Chapter in 1999, Austin was involved in all of the Chapter's activities, at all times and in all seasons. In spring, he helped plant nuts and seedlings,

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**The Maine Chapter
of the American Chestnut
Foundation Board of Directors**

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Contact Us:

Glen Rea
ME-TACF President
231 Buck Street
Bangor, Maine 04401
207 945-6945
glenrea42@msn.com

Eric Evans 207 236-9635 belevans@roadrunner.com
Jay Lindsey 207 377-6174 jlindsey@fairpoint.net

The American Chestnut Foundation:

www.acf.org

The Maine Chapter:

www.me-acf.org

Please send correspondence regarding ME-TACF news, the
ME-TACF website or The Tree Urchin
to TreeUrchin@gmail.com

Meet the New ME-TACF Board Members

Bob Frank was born and lived in New Jersey through high school. He attended Penn State receiving a BS in Forest Management in 1954 and a MF in Forest Products in 1956. After a short stint working for the Blanchard Lumber Company in Boston, he joined the US Forest Service in 1957 reporting to Shin Pond, Maine. Work on the initial forest inventory of Maine ended in 1958. Details in West Virginia, New Hampshire, and Pennsylvania lasted through 1962. In 1963 he was transferred to the research unit in Orono and started a career in researching the management and silviculture of northern forest types. Most of this time was spent on the Penobscot Experimental Forest in Bradley overseeing existing and establishing new long-term experiments. Retirement came in 1995 at which time he started offering forestry consulting services to owners of forest land.

His wife Dorothy and he have been married 45 years and have lived in Hampden on the banks of the Penobscot River during those years. Their son Rob is a civil engineer and principle of a company in Bangor. Their daughter Heidi is an optometrist practicing in both Massachusetts and New Hampshire. They are blessed with three grandchildren. His chief extracurricular activity has involved the Maine Forest & Logging Museum and its early mill settlement at Leonard's Mills.

Alan Markert is a self-employed software developer who moved to Maine 15 years ago. He lives with his wife, Valerie Huebner, in Farmington, where she works as an educator/administrator at the University of Maine at Farmington. Alan has had a lifelong interest in natural history and ecology, and was fortunate enough in the past to participate in numerous botanical expeditions to the high mountains in Montana and Colorado, to Costa Rica and Baja California, and to the deserts of California and Arizona. The chance to restore the American chestnut to its natural range represents hands-on ecology, a perfect fit for Alan's interests. He is anxious to contribute what he can towards the success of this project.

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President's Letter (continued from page 1)

by Bates College.

In future years we will continue down through the membership list until we have sent seeds to all of our members. It is important to note that seniority (length of membership) is what determines who gets the first seeds.

Another item of great news is that the Maine chapter has received permission from the Univ. of Maine and the US Forest Service to establish two five acre seed orchards in the Penobscot Experimental Forest in Bradley. One will have seeds from the Clapper line and the other will have the Graves line. The first plantings should be made in about a year (2010) and in approximately 7 or 8 years we should have the first distributions our own BC3F3 seeds from these orchards. It is important to note that all seeds from these orchards are under the control of the national TACF breeding program. When the time comes to distribute them, we will need to submit a distribution plan to the national organization for their approval. You can read more about these plans on page 11 of the Winter Bark 2009.

This summer should be a busy one as we cull the trees from Clark Granger's upper orchard. This orchard is one of the finest in all of the TACF chapters and reflects the hard work of Clark and the orchard manager Charlie Hudson.

On a sad note, Austin Jones, a long-term member and dedicated worker for the return of the American chestnut, passed away this past January. He was a stalwart in our chapter and contributed enormously to our cause. He will be missed and we give thanks that we had the chance to know this outstanding individual. We extend our condolences to his wife, Norma, and his family. As a final gesture they asked that memorial donations be made in his name to the Maine chapter.

Glen Rea
President, Maine Chapter
The American Chestnut Foundation

New Board Members (continued from page 2)

Roger Willby was born in Greensburg, PA in 1936 and graduated from the local schools and from Purdue Univ. in 1958 with a degree (BS) in mechanical engineering. After military duty as an Army officer he started a career in engineering. Among his jobs was a 25 year span with Western Electric as a senior development engineer and he retired in 1994. He spends his summers at a family camp in Bridgton, ME, and every winter he returns to Georgia where he is an active member of the GA chapter also. He and his wife, Kathy, have 3 children and 5 grandchildren. In 1999 he heard of TACF and visited the research farm at Meadowview. He has been active in the Maine chapter since the beginning and has spent many hours with Bob BaRoss searching for native American chestnut trees. He has also been a good volunteer at our presentations such as Common Ground Fair and the Fryeburg Fair.

For the Record! The Chestnut Tree of One Hundred Horses is the largest and oldest known chestnut tree in the world. Located on Linguaglossa road in Sant'Alfio, on the eastern slope of Mount Etna in Sicily—only 8 km (5 miles) from the mountain's crater—it is generally believed to be 2,000 to 4,000 years old. It is a European Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*). Guinness World Records has listed it for the record of "Greatest Tree Girth Ever", noting that it had a circumference of 57.9 m (190 ft) when it was measured in 1780. Above-ground the tree has since split into multiple large trunks, but below-ground these trunks still share the same roots.

--from Wikipedia

DISTRIBUTION POLICY AND DISTRIBUTION PLAN

For BC3F3 chestnut seeds from The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF)

The distribution of BC3F3 seeds of American chestnut will follow the policy hereby presented and with the approval of an annual Distribution Plan which will be voted on by the Board of Directors of TACF.

POLICY

Distribution committee:

1. The Distribution Committee is composed of the following nine members: The Chair of the Board, CEO/President, Chair of Science Cabinet, Chair of Development Cabinet, Manager/Research Director of Meadowview Farms, and four members selected at large by the Chair of the Distribution Committee.
2. The Chair of the Distribution Committee will be appointed by the Chair of the Board of Directors for a term of one (1) year and may be re-appointed for only one year.
3. Members of the Distribution Committee selected by the Chair of the committee should be representatives of the state chapters.

Materials to be covered by this policy:

1. This distribution Policy applies to all BC3F3 chestnut seeds produced by TACF and the state chapters of TACF prior to release to the general public.
2. All BC3F3 seeds are the property of TACF. Material is subject to a signed germplasm agreement, MOU or other similar agreement.
3. The BC3F3 American chestnut seeds will carry the trademark TACF. This trademark will be registered.

Distribution:

1. Priorities will be ranked as follows:
 - Internal TACF research purposes
 - Contractual commitments to outside partners and cooperators
 - CEO/President for a) discretionary and strategic use and b) for general membership distribution.
2. The Distribution Committee must approve the BC3F3 distribution plans of the state chapters for BC3F3 nuts generated by their breeding programs.
3. Distribution should be consistent with the following guidelines.
 - a) Any recipient of BC3F3 seeds must be a member or cooperator of TACF.
 - b) Seniority (longevity of membership) should be one of the factors in the determination of who receives seeds.
 - c) Recipients of BC3F3 seeds must agree to keep records concerning the growth (height and diameter breast height) and survival, and report to TACF after the first year, the third year and every fifth year thereafter.
 - d) The distribution of seeds from TACF should be used to increase the awareness of the mission of TACF.

October 24, 2007

Did you know...?

that the largest American chestnut (*Castanea dentata*) tree in the U.S. is located in Clarkston, WA. It measures 288 inches in circumference and is 70 ft. tall with a spread of 70 ft.

Austin Jones (continued from page 1)

both in pots and in the ground in our orchards. In the summer, he would be found high in a bucket truck's bucket, working with the backcross pollen on a flowering mother tree. He served as the tree inventory survey coordinator for Knox, Lincoln and Sagadahoc Counties and was on the Board of Directors from 1999 until 2005 and then again from 2006 until his death. Since its planting in 1999, he managed the maintenance of the American chestnut orchard at Merryspring Horticultural Nature Preserve in Camden. In the spring of 2000, we tried a grafting project to increase the gene pool of native Maine trees – Austin was there.

Every September he helped set up and take down the Chapter exhibit at the Common Ground Fair in Unity. He frequently manned our exhibit at other venues, including one held outside on a very windy and rainy day when he had multiple challenges keeping the folding display from the elements. He and Norma were at the top of the list of volunteers who constructed the Hoop House at Medomak Valley High School in 2000 where many chapter projects have been accomplished. He wrote articles for the Urchin and offered his photos of events that he had participated in, such as the planting of American chestnuts on the green in Union where he lived.

In 2002, he traveled with Welles Thurber to U.Mass in Amherst to learn about the bacterium found in the soil that seems to combat the blight fungus and used it to treat several blight-infected trees on Megunticook golf course, monitoring and reporting on their condition. Also in 2002, he and Norma hosted the most marvelous feast for fellow volunteers and toured us all around his property that included a nice planting of American chestnuts as well as all sorts of plants both ornamental and edible. The community website K2BH, now Village Soup, posted a piece about Austin's involvement with the Maine Chapter in 2000 (still listed in the archive).

At the Annual Meeting in 2004, then Chapter president Eric Evans presented him with a book entitled Mountain Lion by Chris Bolgiano for his unflagging volunteer help, and at last year's meeting, Austin won the raffle of a chestnut roaster that he used to toast his homegrown chestnuts. In short, there was no 'short' in Austin's help. He gave long and hard and man, are we ever going to miss him.



We will name our new seed orchard in the Penobscot Experimental Forest the Austin M. Jones Orchard. If you would like to make a memorial gift to ME-TACF in Austin's name, please contact Glen Rea at glenrea42@msn.com. To read the ME-TACF members' *in memoriam* to Austin Jones and to see more photos of Austin, please go to our website at www.me-acf.org.

This article and photos are courtesy of Amy Campbell.

Note from Eric:

As we move into final phases of the breeding program, we need to double or triple our membership and our lists of enthusiastic volunteers. Please fill out and return the green membership-volunteer form insert, so that we know how and when to call on you to help with this exciting work.

For more details about project this year, see our website, www.me-acf.org.

Publicity, Education and Membership Committee (PEM)

The membership level at the national TACF organization continues to stay in the 6500 range. As the unemployment rate continues to rise, we can expect some members may cut back on expenses such as TACF membership. On the other hand, as we send 6th generation BC3-F3 to members we should see and increase in future years as people get in line to receive seeds. Here in Maine we have about 165 members and it has been at this level for several years.

This past January we received another nice gift from Helen Powell in memory of her late husband, Louis (Slim) Powell who died in Feb. 2008. She provided funds for 2 laptop computers plus a power point projector. I have made two power point presentations so far this year. The first was at a well attended meeting of the Friends of Merrymeeting Bay in Dresden, and the second was at a SWOAM meeting in Dover-Foxcroft. Thanks to Ann Rea for putting this power point presentation together and running the machine during my presentations. If you belong to any organization that is looking for speakers, please consider our organization.

This summer on Sat., July 18, we will have a booth at the Penobscot River Celebration Day from 9 am to 3 pm in Bangor. This fall on Sept. 25-27 we will have a booth at the Common Ground Fair in Unity. We have asked for a larger booth to show our expanding display materials. The large “cookie” from the tree that died in Atkinson is a big attraction.

Please consider volunteering to help us in our orchards and other activities, just fill out and return the green membership-volunteer form insert, so that we know how and when to call on you to help with this exciting work.

ME-TACF Orchard (Town)	Line	Date Planted	Inoculated
Merryspring (Camden)	Clapper	1999	yes
Groce (Union)	Clapper	1999	yes
Highmoor (Winthrop)	Clapper	2002	
Mosher (South Hope)	Clapper	2006	
Deer Hill Farm (Weeks Mills)	Graves	2002	yes
Korth (Center Lovell)	Graves	2004	
Reed (Unity)	Graves	2004	
Dutton (Morrill)	Graves	2005	
Veazie (Veazie)	Graves	2005	
Penobscot Exp. Forest (Bradley)	Graves	2006	

Know your Mother (Tree)!

In case you were wondering where our Maine mother trees are located:

Rockport	Center Lovell
Camden	Orono
Yarmouth	Wilton
Jay	Belfast
Buxton	Frankfort
Atkinson	Sunset
Dixfield	Paris
Dover-Foxcroft	Temple
Topsham	Pownal
Dexter	Limerick
Leeds	Nobleboro
Sebec	Winthrop
Freedom	Mariaville
Morrill	Albion
Exeter	Montville
Bradford	South Bristol

Did you know...?

that the largest American chestnut tree in Maine is located in Atkinson. It is 72 feet tall and has a diameter (dbh) of 34 inches. That would make its circumference ($2\pi R$) nearly 107 inches.

Breeding Program Update

This spring we will be making the final planting of third-backcross chestnut trees, thereby completing our goal of planting and growing 20 lines for each of the two sources of blight resistance, called Clapper and Graves. One of these lines will consist of 25 seeds that Glen Rea collected last fall from his manual pollination of the Alford tree in Orono. This was his fourth round of competition with squirrels at that tree, and will bring the total for that line already in Harold Mosher's orchard in Hope up to about 50 trees. Glen is also tending seedlings for two new Graves lines at his house, which we will plant into a new orchard, not yet chosen. These are from trees in Albion and South Bristol that Charlie Hudson, Austin Jones, and Welles Thurber pollinated and harvested in 2008. With these three new lines we will be meeting our original goal of 40 lines of third-backcross hybrid chestnuts for our chapter's share of TACF's breeding program, and ensures a high level of genetic diversity in the eventual blight-resistant trees that we produce in the coming decades.

In June of 2007 we inoculated 210 nine-year-old chestnut trees representing four third backcross lines in our Merryspring (Camden) and Groce (Union) breeding orchards with live lab-grown fungus, to test their resistance to Asian chestnut blight. TACF Pathologist Fred Hebard completed the rating of the blight cankers last October. We selected three trees from each of the four lines to save for further breeding—based both on small canker size and on good American chestnut form, then ME chapter volunteers cut down the losers and piled them for burning. The saved trees will probably outgrow their blight infections, and will be crossed with each other for several years, starting this July, to produce BC3-F2 seeds (first intercrosses of selected third-backcross trees). We will plant the seeds from those crosses—and similar crosses in the ten other breeding orchards in Maine — in new “seed orchards”, and some of those new trees will be fully blight-resistant. Preliminary results from Virginia and the Pennsylvania Chapter have verified this hypothesis. We expect to start harvesting fully blight-resistant American chestnuts in Maine about 7-8 years from now.

In June of last year TACF New England Regional Coordinator Kendra Gurney led another team of volunteers in our second “trial by blight”, inoculating four lines of 6-year-old Graves-resistance trees in Clark Granger's Deer Hill orchard in Weeks Mills (China). Fred and Kendra will do the final ratings and selections of these trees in June, just in time for us to cull the losers before pollination time in July. Then we should be able to collect BC3-F2 seeds from these crosses in October, as in Merryspring, to plant into our new seed orchards in next spring.

submitted by Eric Evans

Finance Committee Report

The Maine chapter continues to have a positive cash flow and we are able to fund the projects that are necessary. The Spellissey Foundation has been a substantial supporter of our chapter and once again donated \$5,000.00 for this past year. We thank you very much. Also, Helen Powell continues to supply funds as we need for special projects or items. Our biggest expense in the past has been the rental of bucket trucks (lifts) to conduct controlled pollination of native mother trees. Now that we have 20+ lines of both Clapper and Graves lines this expense will be greatly reduced. We are entering a phase where we will use open pollination in our orchards. The Univ. of Maine and the U.S. Forest Service will be providing the land we need for our seed orchards so this means we will not need to purchase land for this project.

We wish to thank Joni Decato for being our treasurer for the past 2 years. She has done a superb job and we thank you Joni. Joseph Conwill has been elected treasurer and we thank him for taking on this assignment.

PEM and Finance Reports submitted by Glen Rea

ME-TACF
231 Buck Street
Bangor, ME 04401

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Photo courtesy of Ann Rea