

# CASTANETS

NOVEMBER 1999  
HARVEST ISSUE

CAROLINAS  
CHAPTER  
TACF

RECLAIM YOUR ROOTS

TACF INVITED  
TO EXHIBIT  
AT THE  
CRADLE OF  
FORESTRY

THE SNAPPY LITTLE  
NEWSPAPER OF  
OF THE  
CAROLINAS  
CHAPTER OF THE  
AMERICAN  
CHESTNUT  
FOUNDATION

CASTANETS  
DERIVES FROM  
THE LATIN  
WORD FOR  
CHESTNUT,  
*CASTANEA*

See p. 6  
for newsletter  
name info.

See p. 5 for  
special event an-  
nouncement.

## NUT COLLECTION WORKSHOP WELL ATTENDED

About 22 people attended the Mother Tree/Nut Collection Workshop held September 15th, a Wednesday evening, at the Botanical Gardens in Asheville. Of that number, about eight were members. The remaining fourteen people, came with an intense desire to learn what could be done to help restore the American Chestnut. Ron Myers, forester and regional coordinator of the Mother Tree Project, and Dr. Paul Sisco, TACF plant geneticist, led the workshop. Ron came prepared with booklets and information on nut collection for each participant. He also brought and demonstrated equipment used in nut collection. Dr. Sisco brought branches and burs of Chinese and American Chestnuts from the Meadowview Farms so that everyone could see their differences, and gave tips on tree identification. The audience came from diverse backgrounds, both in life interests and in geography. After instructions on completing field data sheets, and collecting, storing, and shipping nuts, coordinators were chosen to handle  
*(continued on p. 2)*

On October 2nd, four members of the Carolinas Chapter worked out the logistics with the Asheville

office to take the TACF display, new folding table, and chairs, to Forest Festival Day at the Cradle of Forestry in the Pisgah National Forest, close to the Sliding Rock Recreation Area. Buck and Joan Blessing set up the display in the early morning hours, greeted interested attendees, and gave out TACF literature, our local chapter newsletter, and information about chestnuts. They had on hand samples of American Chestnut burs and leaves. Don Myers and Susan Wilson took the afternoon shift. The day's events featured demonstrations of weaving, quilting, and spinning, a blacksmith shop, whittling and woodworking, and bluegrass and string-bands. Don and Susan continued sharing the mission of TACF with afternoon guests, who included two foresters who knew about an American Chestnut just a short hike down the trail from our exhibit. What a "discovery!" Back at the display, children were intrigued with the burs, and folks declared they had an American Chestnut tree in their yard, then had second thoughts about that when they were shown  
*(continued on p. 3)*



**THE CHESTNUT CLARION**  
is the official newsletter of  
The Carolinas Chapter of  
The American Chestnut  
Foundation

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**BECOME A CHARTER MEMBER**

For a one-time fee of \$60 over the usual \$40 membership fee, you may become a CHARTER MEMBER of the Carolinas Chapter. The additional money will help defray chapter startup & operating costs.

**RETURN THE AMERICAN CHESTNUT**

Our new Charter Members  
Robert & Elizabeth Brannon  
Robert Masto  
Sherman Runions  
Mary Jean Tabaloff



A special thanks to Carolina McCready of the Environmental Leadership Center of Warren Wilson College for her help in mailing out the last issue of the newsletter. We could not have done it without her!

*(Nut Collection Workshop Cont from p.1)*

the nut and pollen collections from three regions of WNC. David Thompson (Waynesville), volunteered to coordinate the southwestern region, comprising Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Jackson, Macon, Swain, and Transylvania counties. Bill O'Conner and Bill Trimarco (Etowah and Horseshoe), will be coordinators for the central region comprised of Buncombe, Madison, Mitchell, Yancey, Polk Henderson, and Rutherford counties. Ron Myers will coordinate the Northwest region including Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Burke, Caldwell, Surry, Yadkin, Watauga, and Wilkes. Ron has plantings of TACF chestnuts in Wilkes, Avery, and Burke counties. He will be planting any American chestnuts collected in the NC hardwood nursery at Morganton to insure that the nuts produce vigorous seedlings before we plant them out. Hugh Irwin with the Southern Appalachian Forest Coalition plans to map identified trees using Geographical Information System (GIS) technology with the small group of coordinators.

\*\*\*\*\*  
DID YOU SEE IT?  
THANKS TO THE RAVEN'S NEST,  
THE NEWSLETTER OF THE  
ELISHA MITCHELL AUDUBON SOCIETY  
FOR MENTIONING US  
\*\*\*\*\*

Please notify the editors if you do NOT wish to receive future paper copies of the newsletter. Remember to share your copy of the newsletter with a friend. Not only will it conserve our resources, it will encourage their participation in an adventure of a lifetime, restoration of the American Chestnut.



**Meadowview Notes**

Summer and Fall, 1999  
by Paul Sisco, Staff Geneticist and  
Carolinas Chapter Charter Member

**A Great Harvest!** We harvested over 5000 chestnuts from controlled crosses at the Meadowview Research Farms. 3000 of these were nuts of our most advanced Backcross3 generation -- trees that will be on average 94% American chestnut. **Pollinations using the Carolina Champion Chestnut Tree.**

Carolínians will be particularly happy that we harvested over 100 nuts from a cross of the North Carolina champion chestnut tree to several American chestnut trees in the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area. The resulting offspring will have 50% of their genes from the North Carolina Champion.

**External Science Review.** To make sure our science program was on the right track, TACF Board of Directors funded a review by three scientists from around the country (see the latest issue of The Bark for more details). The reviewers were very impressed with the best trees at the farm and with the fact that a generation takes us only 6 years or so from seed to seed -- very fast for a timber-type species like chestnut.

**New Irrigation System at the Price Farm.** Thanks to the efforts of Forrest MacGregor at the Asheville Satellite Office, we received an \$80,000 grant to put in an irrigation system at the newest of our two farms -- the Price Farm. This system will not only allow us to save the trees in times of drought, but will also permit liquid fertilization through the irrigation pipes. We will use a drip irrigation system -- small emitters at each tree -- to conserve water. **Come up and see us!** Remember the farms are a short 2-hour drive from downtown Asheville via US23 through Erwin and Johnson City, TN, to I-81 north. We are happy to give tours of the farm to folks who call ahead-- (540) 944-4631 or email fred@acf.org or paul@acf.org

**IMPORTANT!**  
IF YOU HAVE AN E-MAIL ADDRESS, PLEASE SEND IT TO LEAH AT: asheville@acf.org

## ASLA invites TACF

On Friday, 17 September, TACF member (and Toastmaster Extraordinaire) Rick Fornoff (of Chestnut Ridge Technologies, Inc.) gave the chestnut slide show presentation to a meeting of the Mountain Section of the American Society of Landscape Architects. Leah Florence, administrative assistant of the Asheville Satellite Office, also attended. The invitation to address the meeting (which included complimentary lunch) was extended by ASLA member (and now Charter Member of The Carolinas Chapter of TACF!) Sherman Runions of Cashiers, NC. Sherman also wrote two articles on the American chestnut and the work of TACF that had run in the local Cashiers newspaper. The meeting was valuable in two respects: it allowed Rick and Leah to evaluate the slide presentation, which includes some new pictures; and it offered a chance to make known to the ASLA some of the ways in which their members could be of assistance in the work of TACF.

Many thanks to Rick for taking the time to do the talk. He is continuing to work on refining the presentation and will conduct a training workshop (date and time TBA) for Chapter members who would like to help with the important outreach activity of giving the presentation to garden clubs, environmental organizations, and other interested groups. Previous speaking experience is less important than a desire to help the cause.

## RON AFIELD: THE MOTHER TREE PROJECT

Mother Tree Project Update  
by Ron Myers

The ACF is looking for local, PURE American chestnut trees that are either producing seed (nuts) or pollen. This genetic material will be used in the future breeding efforts that may produce good backcrosses or seedlings that are adapted to the Carolina range.  
(continued on p. 5)

(Cradle of Forestry Con'd from p. 1)

the differences between the Chinese and American chestnut. And John Devlin, who had attended the Nut Collection workshop, stopped by the display to talk chestnuts.

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Ron Myers email is  
[Ron.Myers@ncmail.net](mailto:Ron.Myers@ncmail.net)

You can also contact him by phone at (919) 553-6178. Get in touch with Ron about finding trees in the fall and next spring.



### Death of a Champion.....Birth of a Legend

People have always been inspired and fascinated by trees. We may even form a special bond with one for various sentimental or historical reasons. Stories of very rare or unique trees are often legendary. An American chestnut tree in Wilkes county, NC was one such specimen. A NC Wildlife magazine article in 1982 regarded this tree as one of the largest American chestnut trees still living in the southeast. At that time, it stood 80 feet tall and measured 33 inches around its trunk. It was listed in the Register of Big Trees as a NC Champion chestnut. This mighty champion fell to its death in spring 1999. Oddly enough, the blight did not topple this stalwart giant; it fell because it was a leaning tree on a steep slope. A basal crack split up the lower bole or trunk; sadly, the great champion finally fell due to the weight of its heavy burden. This tree likely had some degree of resistance to have fought off death for the past 65-75 years. It was a sad day to see this great tree lying on the ground.

*All is not lost.....*  
Luckily prior to its demise,  
(continued on p. 5)

## Chestnut Recipes

### TO ROAST A CHESTNUT

First pierce the shell to create a steam vent by cutting an X with a sharp paring knife through the shell, but not into the meat. Roast the nuts by shaking in a chestnut pan or dry skillet over a medium heat for about 15 minutes. The nuts are done when the shell begins to curl away from the cut and the meat turns a translucent yellow. Peel the nuts while they are still hot. Use your fingers to "pop" the nut free from the outer leathery shell and its inner papery brown pellicle.

For oven roasting, place pierced nuts on a cookie sheet, sprinkle with water, and bake at 400 F for about 20 minutes, stirring often.

For microwave roasting, place a dozen evenly sized, pierced nuts around the edge of a paper plate. Cook on "high" 2 minutes, rotate, and cook another minute. *The Chestnut Cookbook* by Annie Bhagwandin is available from your local bookstore, or direct from:

Shady Grove Publications  
183 Shady Grove Rd.,  
Onalaska, WA 98570,  
[www.chestnutsource.com](http://www.chestnutsource.com)  
\$14.45 postage paid.

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### Central Section Coordinator Visits Meadowview

Bill O'Conner, plant identifier for the Central counties of WNC, visited Meadowview Farms on October 4th. Bill and Peg took in the farms on their way to New England. Paul was out on a mission, but Peter showed them around, pointing out the year's pollination remains and some of the stages represented by the various plots. He also described the inoculation process. Bill says, "The farm is inspiring in its example of what we can do here. I look forward to going back soon."



# NC CHAMPION CHESTNUT

BY DR. PAUL SISCO



Pictures were taken in 1979.

Lucille Griffin of the American Chestnut Cooperators' Foundation sent us pollen from the **NC Champion Chestnut tree** last summer. We used it to pollinate an American tree here in Virginia. Twelve burrs were harvested on September 22. Our code is 'CB1' x NC Champion. "CB1" stands for "Clay Bank 1." Clay Bank is the name of a clearcut where the American chestnut trees have come up rapidly and are flowering. As the NC Champion has since died, we should thank Lucille for her efforts. Our experience in Virginia is that the greatest abundance of flowering Americans is in 5-7 year old clearcuts, where the sun gets in and the trees grow rapidly from the old root systems and flower before they die back. Although the central leader has died, side shoots are still coming up from the tree.

Lucille also grafted buds from the tree and has the grafted offspring near their operation at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, VA. We never know for sure about offspring, but as in horse-racing, you're more likely to get good offspring if you have a good parent."

## TACF Annual Meeting Report from Leah Florence Asheville Satellite Office

The drive up was beautiful and the location was, too. Paul Sisco, Fred Hebard, and Peter Wood from the Meadowview research farm; Hill Craddock (VP, Science Cabinet) from University of Tennessee, Chattanooga; and I carpoled up to Carrollton, Ohio, to attend the TACF annual meeting on 15-16 October. Forrest MacGregor, VP of Development, joined us there. In all, about 150 folks attended. There was much to do and see. Workshops on everything from "Chestnut Biology for New Members" to "Summary of Nationwide Breeding Programs" took place on Saturday, and Sunday was spent on technical reports. A major highlight was Saturday's Tour of The Empire Chestnut Company, one of the few commercial chestnut orchards in the country. Host Greg Miller showed us through his beautiful orchard, treated us to apple cider, and gave us all an in-depth look at the "life" of the chestnut tree and its growers (Empire also sells chestnuts for roasting: see p. 5 for ordering information). Another highlight was the official graduation of the Maine Chapter from provisional to full status (this shows that it CAN be done, Carolinas members!). And, we must mention the last highlight: a taste of the new American Chestnut Chardonnay, produced by a Vermont company with the able assistance of Ed Metcalfe of the Bennington Office. The label shows a beautiful drawing of a spreading chestnut tree, and the vintner has agreed to donate a portion of the sale of each bottle to TACF. The wine is not yet available here; we'll keep you posted.

The major news is that the year 2000 annual meeting of TACF will take place in Abington, Virginia, 20-22 October. Abington is just a stone's throw from the Meadowview farms, so it will be a wonderful chance for Carolinas members to both visit the farm AND attend the annual meeting. More on that as we get into the new millenium!

## Enter Villain, Stage Left

The Asheville Citizen-Times reported on Sunday, September 5th that the Asian long-horned beetle, which migrated from China in wooden crates, has already destroyed thousands of hardwood trees in New York and Chicago. The cycle begins when females chew through the bark to lay eggs. Resulting larvae feed inside the tree for more than a year, but leave a dime-sized hole when they burrow out. Damage is almost always fatal.

## CAROLINAS MEMBERSHIP & FISCAL REPORT

As of July 01, 1999, there were approximately 258 members in the Carolinas. As of that date, the chapter received \$2725 in extra donations over regular membership dues. The chapter has spent, on various things (newsletter copying and mailing, folding table and chairs for display, 2 nut-gathering kits, meeting room rentals, etc.) about \$1074. This leaves \$1651 in the chapter's coffers. This does NOT include the chapter's share (\$15 each) of each member's dues, which will be disbursed to the chapter when it gets its own tax # and checking account.

**THE MISSION OF TACF IS SIMPLE: TO RESTORE THE AMERICAN CHESTNUT AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE EASTERN FOREST ECOSYSTEM THROUGH COOPERATIVE RESEARCH AND A SCIENTIFIC BREEDING PROGRAM.**

**(Mother Tree Project Update**  
continued from p. 3)

This can only be accomplished by willing volunteers and scouts to field check the presence of known trees still in our woods. During a Nut collection workshop this fall, several people stepped forward to serve as regional coordinators or contacts. They are as follows:

**NW Section, Ron Myers**

Ron.Myers@ncmail.net

**Central, Bill O'Conner**

billoc@brinet.com

**SW Section, The Thompsons**

namaste@primeline.com

Special thanks go to David & Kim Thompson who obtained 44 nuts from several different trees this fall in the southwestern section of the state. This seed from NC chestnuts will be used to grow seedlings and if anyone knows where David can collect chinkapin seed, drop him a line. Efforts this spring will concentrate on collecting pollen from flowering chestnuts in NC. Timing is critical during this step to harvest catkins when they are ripe and the orchard trees at Meadowview are also receptive.

**Chestnut Tip:** The best way to learn more about chestnuts is to join TACF, come to chapter events, and volunteer for projects.

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**VOTE NOW!**  
See page 6!

Decide on a name for the newsletter and choose a logo for the chapter! Entries are on p. 6 (remember: the choice of names includes "Castanets"). Vote for your favorite by email, phone, or regular mail.

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The next Newsletter will be coming out in the Spring. Deadline for articles or announcements is the first week in March. Send to [swilson@buncombe.main.nc.us](mailto:swilson@buncombe.main.nc.us)  
Susan Wilson/Don Myers  
PO Box 208  
Leicester, NC 28748  
(828) 683-1247

**Death of a Champion...**

(continued from p.3)

interested tree lovers and chestnut enthusiasts recognized its value and were able to obtain genetic material from the crown. This fall 24 burs were produced from the Wilkes Champion graft and TACF made a controlled cross with another pure American chestnut that was able to bear nuts. These seednuts will be used to produce new chestnut seedlings that may be better adapted to local sites in NC.

**Perhaps this will be the start or birth of a legend reborn!**

Help bring back this once great champion to our forests. Get involved in your local chapter to help find and field document remaining Mother Trees that can be used in the project.

For more information contact  
[Ron.Myers@ncmail.net](mailto:Ron.Myers@ncmail.net)

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**THE CHEROKEE  
HAVE A NAME FOR IT!**

Dr. Paul Sisco has "discovered" how the word for The American chestnut looks in the Cherokee alphabet. The pronunciation appears under the letters.

chestnut  $\begin{matrix} \mathcal{J} & \mathcal{I} \\ \text{ci} & \text{li} \end{matrix}$

**Y2K SPRING EVENT!**

We're planning an early spring gathering at The Pisgah Inn on **Saturday, 6 May 2000!** A light lunch at the Inn (cost is moderate), a hike to look at chestnut stumps and sprouts, and a pollination workshop. We've reserved a room for the lunch and an inside activity, in case the weather doesn't cooperate for a hike. Please plan to come and to bring a friend who might be interested in joining TACF—the room can hold 70 people! Details will be in the spring newsletter.



**CHESTNUTS TO ROAST!**

Fresh (Chinese) chestnuts are available throughout November from Empire Chestnut Company. 5 lbs of fresh chestnuts is \$16.25; 1 lb Dried chestnut kernels is \$8.00, & 1 lb chestnut flour is \$8.00 (all include shipping). Annie Bhagwandin's chestnut cookbook (paperback) ordered alone is \$12.50 (includes shipping) or \$10.00 with any other order. Contact Empire for prices on larger quantities:

Empire Chestnut Co., 3276 Empire Road SW, Carrollton, OH 44615-9515. email: [empire@eohio.net](mailto:empire@eohio.net)  
phone & fax: 330 - 627-3181  
hours Mon-Sat, 8-6 Eastern time

**On the Air**

Forrest MacGregor recorded a show on the chestnut with Carlton Burke and Dan Lazar, hosts of the "Nature News" radio show on 1310AM. The tape was aired on Saturday morning, 30 October, 1999. Their "tie in" was to Halloween, and the "grey ghosts" of chestnut trees still in our forests. We thank them for allowing us the opportunity to make people aware of the trees and TACF's work to restore them to our forests.



# CAROLINAS

THE AMERICAN CHESTNUT FOUNDATION

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Logo 1

# NAME THAT NEWSLETTER!

**\*RELAX!**

Your newsletter editors are just playing! "Castanets" is just one possible name for your newsletter. No official name has been voted on yet. Other names to vote on are:

- The Contact
- The Connection
- The Champion
- The Chirrup
- The Chorus
- Chestnut Chronicles
- Nut News
- The American Chestnut Speaks
- Carolinas Chestnut Journal
- Chestnut Clarion
- Mast
- Chestnut Harvester
- The Chestnut News
- The American Chestnut News
- Castanea Dentata News



Logo 2



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Logo 3

# THE CAROLINAS CHAPTER

The American Chestnut Foundation

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Logo 4



Some suggestions were so good that they are already in use by other chapters. Send your VOTE for logo and newsletter name to Leah Florence by 1December. You can email

[asheville@acf.org](mailto:asheville@acf.org)  
call (828)281-0047, or mail in your vote. Winners will appear in the first issue of 2000.

Castanets  
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