



Chestnut Seedlings



Newsletter of the Massachusetts Chapter of The American Chestnut Foundation
Spring 2003
Published semi-annually

The mission of the Massachusetts Chapter is to promote the preservation and restoration of the American chestnut species in the Commonwealth through the development and propagation of chestnut trees which are resistant to the chestnut blight.



TACF-MA Spring Update

Welcome Rhode Island!

The Massachusetts Chapter wishes to extend a warm welcome to the Rhode Island members of TACF, and all others from that state interested in American chestnut restoration. To the best of our MA Chapter's ability, we would like to assist you with promoting American chestnut research in your state through research and publicity.

Currently, Rhode Island residents Jim Garland and Yvonne Federowicz work actively with our chapter—Jim, as a chapter board member and planter, and Yvonne, assisting with our extensive databases. So welcome to our MA Chapter, our activities, and our newsletter! Please contact us for assistance and join us in our meetings and projects.

It's Planting Time!

Spring planting time is almost here. Approximately 2000 nuts await planting in our Massachusetts Chapter Orchards. Our strategy is to keep our orchards small enough so that the care at each location can be directed by one orchard manager. Each orchard includes two to three lines, that is, about 100 progeny from two separate pollinations of two to three MA mother trees (fourth generation of the breeding line). We now have sites in every area of the state, hopefully within an hour of your home. The orchard manager is really the organizer for the site, and needs volunteers to help, especially on planting day! Please look over the list of orchard locations (*page 2*) and contact the managers whom you can assist. Generally the orchard planting takes a day. You'll feel a wonderful sense of satisfaction at the end of the day looking at the neat rows of new sprouts, one more stage to our goal of a blight-resistant tree!

...from the editor



CHESTNUT SEEDLINGS

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Feeding Hills, MA 01030-1115
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Email: machapter@acf.org
Website : MA Chapter website is
currently under reconstruction

TACF-MA Board Meetings are usually scheduled for the fourth Sundays of January, April, July and October. They are held at Broad Meadow Brook Wildlife Sanctuary in Worcester. **The meetings are open to our Massachusetts supporters.** Please contact the Chapter office to confirm each date prior to the meeting.

TACF-MA Officers and Board of Directors

Susan Cormier, Pres.; Agawam
Frank Howard, MD.; V. Pres.;
West Newton
Anne M. Myers, MD
Treas.; Stoughton
Sandy Gessford, Clerk;
North Canaan, CT

John Emery; Wayland
Jim Garland; Foster, R.I.
Dave Gessford; N. Canaan, CT
Richard Hoffman; Wilbraham
Gary Jacob; Medway
Mike Meixsell; Sudbury
Mike Novack; Buckland
John Pribilla; Falmouth
Guy Shepard, Georgetown
Brad Smith; Westboro
Dave Uguccione; Three Rivers
Rufin Van Bossuyt; Upton
Charlotte Zampini; Westboro

Orchards in Massachusetts—Volunteer Opportunities

New Orchards for 2003

Ashfield-Hawley Orchard, Ashfield, MA. Orchard Mgr., Mike Novack, Buckland, MA; 413-625-9741; stepbystepfarm@shaysnet.com

Lincoln Conservation Orchard, Lincoln, MA. Orchard Mgr. John Emery, Wayland, MA; 508-358-5315; johnviolin7@aol.com

Lunenburg Orchard, Lunenburg, MA. Orchard Mgrs., Jamie and Linda Donalds, Boylston, MA; 508-869-0331; n1djb@yahoo.com

Moore State Park, Mill Street, Paxton, MA. Orchard Mgr., Cheryl Mead, Medford, MA; 508-849-2141; freshwaternews@yahoo.com

Expanding Orchards

Benjamin SVT Orchard, Route 126, Wayland, MA. Orchard Mgr., John Emery, (see contact information above).

Conway Orchard, Conway, MA. Orchard Mgrs. Gerry and Susan Cormier, Feeding Hills, MA; 413-789-0803; tacfma@att.net (note: this site, which was established by the National Organization previously, will be re-developed with more advanced breeding stock).

Middlefield Orchard, Cedar Hill Road, Middlefield, MA. Orchard Mgr., Mike Novack, Buckland, MA; 413-625-9741; stepbystepfarm@shaysnet.com

North Grafton Orchard, 46 Carroll Road, North Grafton, MA. Orchard Mgr., Charlotte Zampini, Westborough, MA; 508-836-4108; cbzampini@aol.com

Sterling Orchard, North Row Road, Sterling, MA. Orchard Mgrs. Dr. Robert Dalesandro and Marian Lynn, Leominster, MA; 978-534-5212 or contact Gerry Cormier (see contact information above).

Wrentham DC Orchard, Emerald Street, Wrentham, MA. Orchard Mgr., Anne Myers, Stoughton, MA; 781-344-9836; ammyers@massmed.org

For information on the above planting sites and dates, or to assist with the on-going maintenance of orchards (weeding, mulching, watering and measuring growth), contact the orchard managers, or the MA Chapter Office 413-789-0803; machapter@acf.org.



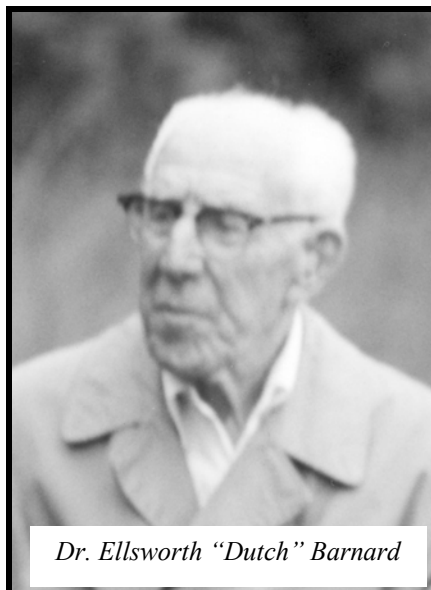
Chestnut Memories by Dr. Ellsworth Barnard

This article is the second in our series of American chestnut recollections. Dr. Ellsworth Barnard, retired English professor at UMASS-Amherst, is a native of Shelburne, Massachusetts. He winters in Amherst and spends summers at High Ledges Wildlife Sanctuary in Shelburne - property that he and his wife, Mary, donated to the Mass. Audubon Society. Dr. Barnard is the author of "In a Wild Place—a Natural History of High Ledges."

We have general accounts of carloads of chestnuts being shipped by rail from the Appalachians to the cities of the East Coast. It is of interest to have first-hand testimony that chestnuts were at one time a commercial crop in Eastern Massachusetts.

Nelson Torrey, a farmer in Groton, thirty miles n.w. of Boston, kept a diary (unearthed by his great grandson, Floyd Jaquay) that recorded his activities from day to day between 1865 and the early 1890s. Among the fascinating glimpses of rural life during this period is the fact that during October, harvesting of chestnuts was among his most important tasks. This is especially true during the early years. In 1865, between September 28 and November 9, there were 27 days that were especially devoted to harvesting or delivering chestnuts. The entry for October 13 begins: "Picked chestnuts all day. Threshed one tree." And the entire entry for the next day is: "Picked chestnuts. Threshed four trees." The final reference to chestnuts is dated November 20: "Went to Lowell with seven bushels of chestnuts, got \$6.25 per bushel. Stormy."

One wonders what kind of labor is described by "picked" and "threshed". In search of the answer, I turn to recollections of my own boyhood on a farm in western Massachusetts in the years just before the blight struck in the early twenties. Chestnuts were not harvested commercially, at least in that area; but chestnuts abounded, and I remember



Dr. Ellsworth "Dutch" Barnard

vividly the pleasure of "going chestnutting" on bright October weekends. The nuts would mature and the burs begin to open about the beginning of the month, but they did not immediately fall to the ground, and my first interpretation of "threshed" was that it referred to our practice, early in the season, of using a long pole to dislodge the burs. But at this stage it was not always easy to remove the nuts from the burs, especially by hand. I conclude that "threshing" meant separating the nuts by the use of a flail.

As for "picking," one's first thought,

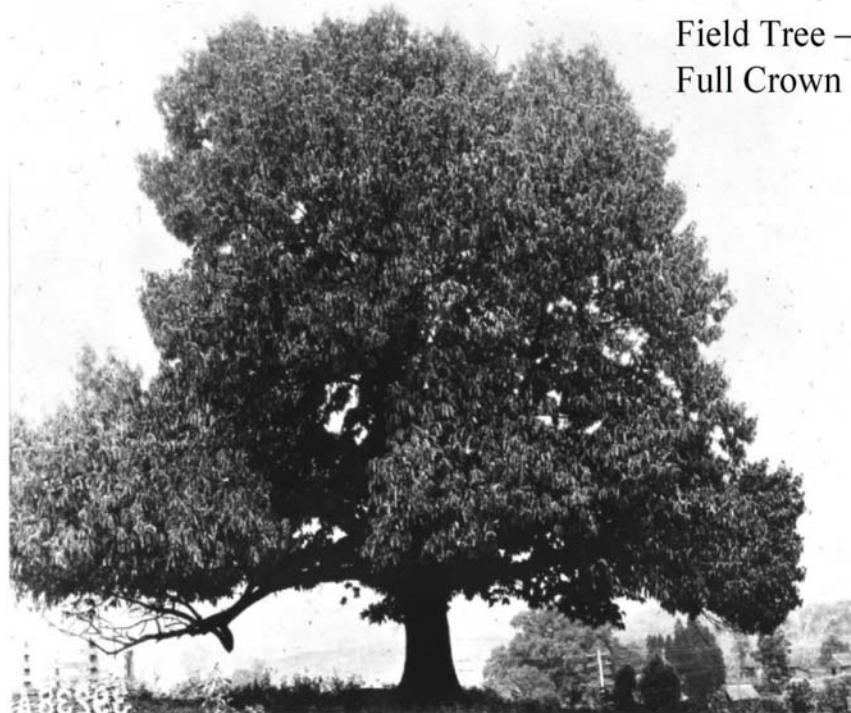
naturally, is that it refers to removing the burs from the tree, as one would "pick" apples. However, if the burs were left on the trees, they would eventually fall automatically. The nuts, if they had not already fallen, would bounce out when the burs hit the ground. So perhaps "picking" meant "picking up."

In this connection, I recall that in walking to and from the one-room school I attended a mile from home, I would often go through a neighbor's pasture where there was a scattering of huge old chestnut trees. In October the ground beneath them would be covered with nuts. It would take only a few minutes to fill my lunch-box.

According to his diary in 1865, Nelson Torrey picked 22 bushels and 22 quarts of chestnuts, which he sold for between \$6.25 and \$8.00 a bushel. But since there were eight days when he "picked chestnuts all day," perhaps the real total was greater.

After 1865 there is a rapid decline in the number of references to chestnuts, and after 1879 there are none. I have no explanation for the change.

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*Read Ana Ronderos' article "Traipsing High Ledges" in the Summer/Fall 2001 Journal.*



Field Tree – Full Crown

## “BRANCHING OUT” - MA CHAPTER OUTREACH

### Chestnuts “International Flavor”

*Massachusetts Chapter Board member Dr. Frank Howard and his wife, Deborah, recently spent 28 days in Japan. The following are Frank’s observations.*

“Just as U.S. students learn about our nation’s cultural history with such field study experiences as “Native Trees, Native Peoples”, offered at The Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University, Japanese students visit their temple and shrine sites to learn about their heritage. Like our native Americans, the early Shinto beliefs centered around the animistic worship of natural phenomena – the sun, water, trees and the process of fertility.

This chestnut vendor was one of many food vendors offering refreshments to students and tourists along the gardens, shrines and temples in Dazakfu, a city of ancient culture in Japan.”



*A kerosene-fired pressure cooker is in the foreground; a warmer at the vendor’s right elbow holds steamed chestnuts awaiting the next customer.*

### N. H. ARBORISTS ASSOCIATION PRESENTATION

In wintry March, 2003, MA Chapter Board Members Rufin Van Bossuyt, Jr. and Dr. Charlotte Zampini enlightened the New Hampshire Arborists Association about American chestnut restoration. The following is an excerpt from a letter of thanks to our participants:

27 March 2003

Dear Rufin:

It was such a pleasure to welcome you to the 2003 Annual Spring Meeting of the New Hampshire Arborists Association on 25 March in Barrington, N.H.

Thank you for your very succinct and very fine team presentation with Dr. Charlotte Zampini entitled *American Chestnut Restoration* ...the attendees both learned from and greatly enjoyed your presentation and want me to thank you on their behalf.

You and Charlotte have sent our thinking forward!

Very Sincerely,  
Mary K. Reynolds  
Immediate Past President



*Gerry Cormier explains the TACF mission to a visitor in March at the Westfield River Watershed Symposium, Westfield State College, Westfield, MA*



*Tahanto H.S. Envirothon students in Boylston supervised by Sue Moore (far right) plant seed for '03 MA Chapter research fields.*

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*MacDuffie School student in Springfield prepares containers for planting chestnuts.*



## Global Warming may be Positive for Northern Forests?



Photo courtesy of Brad Smith

A recently released report from the Pew Center on Global Climate Change on the potential effects of global warming on U.S. forests suggests that northern forests may become more productive and more important for the nation's timber supply in future decades. The report, titled *Forests & Global Climate Change: Potential Impacts on U.S. Forest Resources* can be read or downloaded at <http://www.pewclimate.org/projects/forestry.cfm> (Above article reprinted with permission from **Massachusetts Forest Update April, 2003**, an online newsletter about forest happenings in Massachusetts) [www.state.ma.us/dem/programs/forestry/urban/currentCitFor](http://www.state.ma.us/dem/programs/forestry/urban/currentCitFor)

### Getting the Message Out!

*The Massachusetts Chapter is the fortunate recipient of a \$4000 education grant from the Norcross Wildlife Foundation, in Wales, MA. This will allow us to purchase PowerPoint Slide equipment, and will make it easier to create new slides and presentations tailored to the interests of particular audiences. Our thanks to Anne Myers, grant writer and Board Member!*

## Congress Sees the Forest for the Trees

(reprinted from "The Citizen Forester" April 2003, Volume 70)

After more than a dozen continuing resolutions since last October, the 2003 Appropriations Bill passed both chambers on February 13. The Bill includes \$36,235,000 for the urban and community forestry program administered by the U.S.D.A. Forest Service in cooperation with the States. This results in level funding for the federal Urban and Community Forestry Program for fiscal year 2003, and likely, level funding for the Massachusetts DEM Urban and Community Forestry Program. For 2004, the President's proposed budget includes a slight increase for Urban and Community Forestry to \$37,893,000.

For our [Citizen Forester, January Survey] e-question: What are the Most Promising Strategies for Preserving or Enhancing Tree and Forest Canopy in Massachusetts Communities? The two most prominent responses were:

- In a word: Soil! Feed the soil and the soil will feed the plant. The poor health of our residential landscapes and urban forests is directly tied to the soil. There is a vast biological community that exists in the world beneath our feet that we continually ignore. The plant kingdom and most certainly trees and forests, have forged strong symbiotic relationships with the dynamic subterranean entities of the soil. We are only now beginning to understand this web of life. If we employ strategies that build the soil and encourage an understanding of soil biology, we will become better stewards of the land and will build our environmental resources for future generations.

- Manage growth and protect existing forest-lands. Unless our current land-use laws are changed and communities are able to manage growth and development, we will continue to lose forests to development, redevelopment and sub-division. At the same time, Massachusetts must continue to provide funding to state agencies and local communities to purchase and protect important open spaces and forest lands.

## A Word About Elms...

(Many folks interested in American chestnut restoration frequently ask about elm recovery.)

The disease-resistant (hopefully) American elms are also trying to make a come-back as a viable component of our community forests. For those interested in considering elms, the DEM Urban and Community Forestry is currently recommending the *Ulmus Americana* varieties 'Princeton,' 'Valley Forge' and 'New Harmony.'

Those interested in elms should remember to avoid over-planting any particular species, and you should make sure your community is removing and properly disposing of any dead native elms. For more information on elm restoration in Massachusetts check out Elm Watch. For some more information on elms and some detail on different cultivars, see this page by the University of Connecticut or this article University of Minnesota Extension Service.

(The previous articles reprinted with permission from "The Citizen Forester" April 2003, Volume 70 The newsletter of the Massachusetts Urban and Community Forestry Program. The full newsletter can be viewed at the web site <http://www.state.ma.us/dem/programs/forestry/urban/index.htm> . Courtesy of Paul Jahnige, Community Action Forester, Western and Central MA [paul.jahnige@state.ma.us](mailto:paul.jahnige@state.ma.us).)



Photo of American Elm on UMASS campus by Gilbert Carley, courtesy of Bruce Carley; visit [www.elmpost.org](http://www.elmpost.org)



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web site is relocating  
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due out soon!*

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## ***Join us!***

Enclosed is my  
Membership support of:

- Gold Leaf, \$1,000
- Silver Leaf, \$500
- Bronze Leaf, \$250
- Green Leaf, \$100
- Regular, \$40
- Student, \$15
- Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## **Membership Application**

***Enclosed is an additional contribution in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_ in support of  
the Massachusetts Chapter's activities.***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

This is a gift membership from: \_\_\_\_\_  
address: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership includes subscriptions to ***The Bark and The Journal of the American Chestnut Foundation*** and enrollment in the **Massachusetts Chapter**. Please make check payable to The American Chestnut Foundation, P.O. Box 4044, Bennington, VT 05201-4044. TACF is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Except for the member services portion of your contribution (valued at \$15), your gift is tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law.