



THE American Chestnut FOUNDATION | MD CHAPTER

Maryland Chapter of The American Chestnut Foundation Spring 2025 Newsletter



Jeff White is President of the Maryland Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation

Hello, Maryland, DC, and Delaware chestnut enthusiasts! We are well into spring and it's about time for this newsletter. If I had to choose my favorite two weeks of the year based on the seasons and weather, it would be the first two weeks of May. Nature never fails to amaze me as the world around us turns green. All the trees are leafing out, and if you look closely, you'll notice that the young leaves come in subtle shades of green, depending on the species.

I have been busy starting chestnut seedlings that we will be offering to our members and friends. Additionally, we have ordered a batch of T-shirts with our chapter logo that we made available at our spring meeting. More apparel will be available this summer and fall.

I have included our chapter highlights below but please read on for the complete story. If you have any questions or want additional information please don't hesitate to contact me at mdtacf@outlook.com

Officers:

President: Jeff White

Vice Presidents: Trey Belew

Secretary: Lara Hause

Treasurer: Ted Zegers

Board of Directors:

Gary Carver

Chapter Highlights:

We are proposing two modifications to our chapter bylaws.

1. To allow the board of directors to participate in and hold a meeting by means of conference telephone, computer connection, or similar methods using real-time communications.
2. The membership may nominate and elect individuals who have made historical contributions to the Chapter to serve as "Emeritus Directors." Emeritus Directors shall hold indefinite terms, shall be

Jim Curtis	invited to all Board meetings, and to participate in all Board
David Gordon	discussions, but shall have no vote. The membership will be
Ron Kuipers	receiving a separate email to vote on these changes before our
Bruce Levine	business meeting on October 19, 2025. You can find our draft
Karl Mech	bylaws here: https://tacf.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/MD-
Susan Proper	bylaws-draft...
Chuck Selden	In February, Bruce Levine, our board member and past president
Tony Sutton	took on the interim role of president and CEO of the National
Tom Vegella	TACF while the search begins for TACF's next leader. You can
Dean Yap	read more here: https://tacf.org/tacf-welcomes-interim-president-
Jeffrey Strathern	ceo-bruce-l...
Scott Stewart	I, along with board members Dean Yap and David Gordon,
	attended the National Spring Meeting in Abington, VA, from March
	20 to 22.
	We held a board meeting in February, followed by our annual
	spring membership meeting on April 26.
	On April 13, I gave a presentation titled "The Fall and Rise of the
	American Chestnut" to the members of the Sandy Spring
	Museum. It was an engaging and appreciative group that also
	showed great generosity.

Our first annual Maryland Chestnut Festival will be on Sunday, October 19, at Milkhouse Brewery at Stillpoint farm in Frederick County, 8253 Dollyhyde Rd, Mt Airy, MD 21771

<https://www.milkhousebrewery.com/>

Orchard and Greenhouse News

Orchard maintenance is an ongoing process. During the winter months, our focus has been on pruning and general cleanup. As the weather warms, we shift our attention to weeding around young trees and mowing. When our mature chestnuts bloom, we will conduct controlled pollination on our best trees. Crossing our best trees in an ongoing process to produce chestnuts with increasing resistance to the chestnut blight.

Below are descriptions of the some of the activities, mainly maintenance, taking place at our greenhouse space and orchards. The list is not all inclusive, as most orchards have a dedicated orchard steward who at times takes a small group out for maintenance. We sometimes need to hire a contractor to chip branches, limbs, and grind stumps.



Starting Chestnuts from seed

Nearly 1000 chestnuts were started from seed at the Baltimore county greenhouse on February 1, 2025. Top left photo is packing the pots, top right pots have been filled with planting media and seeds (chestnuts) have been planted. Bottom photo, our fantastic work crew. Special thanks to the students that came from Loyola College

Orchard Maintenance



Monocacy Chestnut Orchard

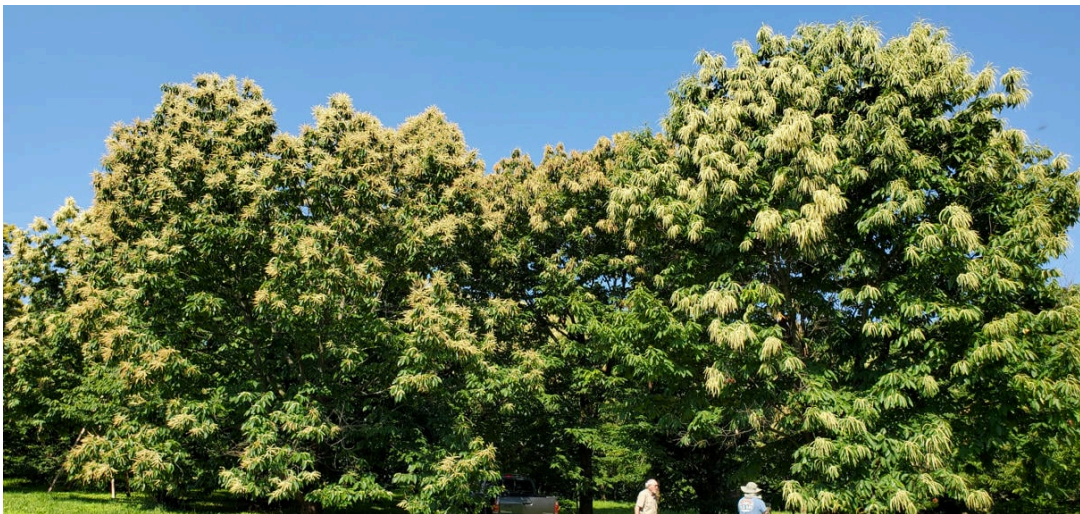
On February 26, volunteers from the Maryland Chapter of TACF met at our Monocacy chestnut orchard to remove trees that were crowding our better performing trees. We made excellent progress and plan to return next week and finish up. The work crew consisted of the following: Dean Yap, Gary Newbaum, Susan Proper, Alan Proper, Chuck Seldon, Ron Kuipers, Jeff White and Dave Martone.



A newborn fawn in our Monocacy Orchard

This new-born fawn was discovered by Myron Horst on May 17th in the Monocacy orchard. Like all 22 of our other orchards, Monocacy was enclosed by a deer fence when it was established in 2006. By 2023 the plastic mesh fence had collapsed and was removed. The trees had grown large enough that the antlered deer could no longer rub the bark off the trunks and all but the lowest branches are out of reach from the voracious herd. Come September, the Monocacy trees will be dropping many thousands of nuts and our human pickers will be competing with both deer and squirrels for our share.

Thanks Ron and Myron for sharing. If you have a chestnut related story please send it so we can share with others in our newsletters.



Our Monocacy orchard in mid June, soon this scene will repeat itself. Can you imagine what the canopy of the forest looked when chestnut was a co-dominant tree.





Chestnut Orchard at Rockville Izaak Walton League

On March 29, 2025, MDTACF planted seeds in the orchard of the Izaak Walton League's Rockville chapter. Many of these seeds came from pollen collected last year by climbers on the Jones Mill Chinese tree, which we paired with American mother trees in several of our germplasm conservation orchards. Thanks to a large group of volunteers for planting these unique nuts. More information on the Jones Mill tree can be found at

<https://mdtacf.blogspot.com/.../pollen-collection-at...>



Chestnut Orchard at Hampstead

On April 5, four of us cut down two large blighted chestnut trees at the Hampstead orchard. These trees were once part of the original demonstration orchard planted in 2010 before the orchard was converted to a backcross breeding orchard in 2011.

The brush from these blighted trees was used to shore up the weakened fence line where deer have been breaking through. We also repaired several other areas of the fencing. We hope to collect chestnuts from the best trees at this orchard in the fall.

Many thanks to Jeff White, Jeff Strathern and Ray Price for completing this job in short order.

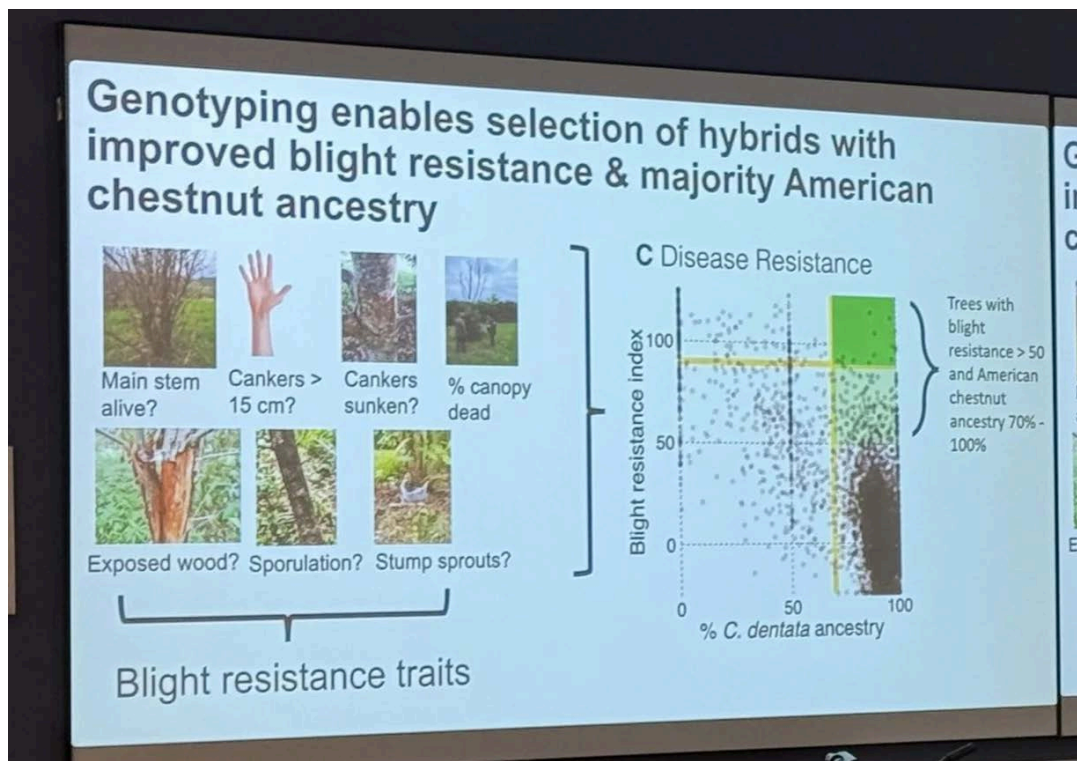


New Planting, Chestnut Orchard at WMREC, Keedysville

On May 9, 2025, before the rain started this spring Maryland Chapter volunteers watered the new trees at the WMREC orchard at Keedysville. (Western Maryland Research and Education Center, University of Maryland) Close to 900 new seeds were planted the spring of 2024. Many are already higher than the top of the tree tubes.

Events and Outreach

Below are photos and descriptions of outreach and our annual spring membership meeting. Let us know if you are associated with a group that would like to hear about the foundation and chapters ongoing work to restore the American Chestnut. We would be glad to come meet your group. Education is part of our mission.



National TACF Spring Meeting in Abington VA and Meadowview

I, along with board members Dean Yap and David Gordon, attended the National Spring Meeting in Abington, VA, from March 20 to 22.

TACF provided attendees with a day of great informative presentations. Recurrent Genomic Selection (RGS) is the main strategy TACF is using for breeding disease resistance into American chestnut. You can read more about RGS on the TACF website <https://tacf.org/tree-breeding/>

There was also discussion on other science strategies including transgenic american chestnut lines and research on speed breeding.



Wall to Wall Chestnut Seedlings

During the spring TACF meeting we got a tour of the Meadowview research orchards and greenhouses.

Maryland Chapter Annual Meeting on April 26



We filled the meeting room for our spring meeting where Donald Edward Davis, author of "the American Chestnut, an environmental history" was or featured speaker. We sold lots of T-shirts, chestnut seedlings, and signed up a number of new members. If you are interested in T-Shirts, ballcaps, or seedlings send me an email, mdtacf@outlook.com. We will have them on hand at our fall festival.



At our spring meeting on April 26 Ron Kuipers our master orchard steward was awarded the Volunteer Service Award. I have only known Ron for a year or so but I can tell no one is more dedicated, tireless, and pretty much never says no. We are all so fortunate to have Ron on our team. Thank you Ron!

Sandy Spring Museum Garden Club



I had a great time talking about our chapter's work and presenting "The Fall and Rise of the American Chestnut" to the members of the Sandy Spring Museum. What a great group with sincere interest in our work. Thank you for your donation to the chapter..

A Recent Walk in the Woods

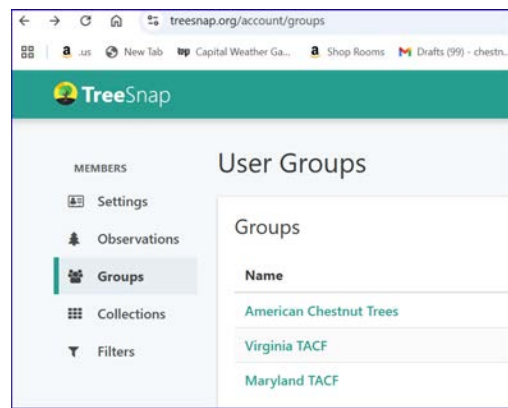
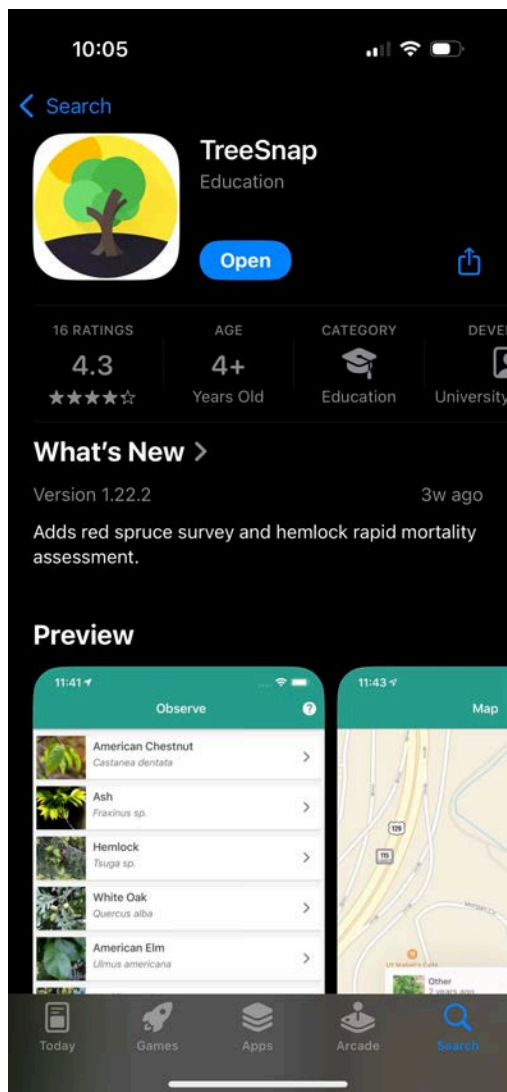
Last week we got away from the farm for a hike to check up on a long surviving American chestnut. Although the tree has the chestnut blight it is still hanging in there. The tree produced burrs last fall but the nuts were not viable. Unfortunately chestnuts are not self pollinating. They need another chestnut in close proximity to cross pollinate with. We used a software app called TreeSnap to record the condition and location of the tree (see below).



Finding a wild chestnut in the woods is like finding hidden treasure.



Let us know if you think you have found an American chestnut.



You can download and install the TreeSnap application on your phone. Create an account and you can see photos and descriptions of American chestnut trees. The information users collect is shared with TACF and scientist working to save our trees. I created a user group "Maryland TACF" that you can join. You can also join the other American chestnut groups.

New apparel is coming with our Maryland Chapter Logo. We will start with T-Shirt and ballcap and add sweatshirts this fall. We will let you know as soon as more are available.



Ball caps, T-Shirts, and Hoodies. We will be selling a limited selection of each at our fall Chestnut festival. These are some of our samples.



Milkhouse Brewery at Stillpoint farm

Our first Maryland Chestnut festival will be held at Milkhouse Brewery at Stillpoint Farm on Sunday Oct 19, 2025, from 1 to 5 pm. Let me know if you have a favorite Chestnut recipe. We will be roasting fresh chestnuts and selling chestnuts to take home for eating or planting. Watch your email, more details will be coming as we get closer.

Milkhouse Brewery

8253 Dollyhyde Rd, Mt Airy, MD 21771

<https://www.milkhousebrewery.com>

<https://www.facebook.com/MilkhouseBrewery>

I would like to thank our new members that have joined since the first of the year, Let me know if I missed you, and I am only using first names to respect privacy.

New Members: Sam, Marjorie, Ronny, Christopher, David, Brian, Mary Ellen, Matthew, Allison, Robin, Greg, Sarah, James, Dave, Tracey, Timothy, Suna, Reade, Luke, Sarah Elizabeth, Sean. Katherine, Arnold. Jon, Dennis, and Chestnut Friends

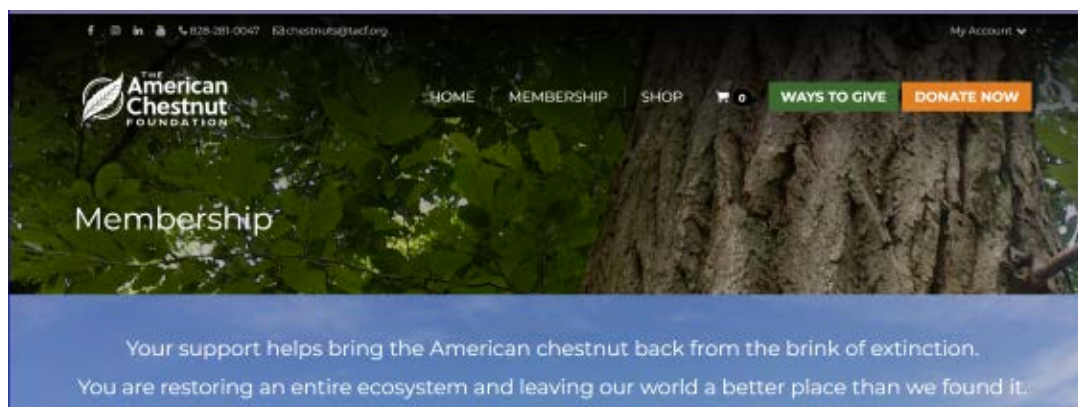
Plus there have been dozens of renewing members. Thank you for your continued support.

In closing, if not currently a member, please consider joining TACF and selecting Maryland as your Chapter. Your membership helps the national organization and Maryland Chapter in bringing back the American Chestnut. Your donation helps your Maryland Chapter establish and maintain local seed and research orchards. As the words in the image below says...

Your support helps bring the American chestnut back from the brink of extinction.

You are restoring an entire ecosystem and leaving our world a better place than we found it.

Join Us



Maryland Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation



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