

Maryland Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation Spring 2026 Newsletter and Meeting [View in browser](#)



## Maryland Chapter of The American Chestnut Foundation Spring 2026 Newsletter



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

### **Officers:**

President: Jeff White  
Vice Presidents: Trey Belew  
Secretary: Lara Hause  
Treasurer: Ted Zegers

### **Board of Directors:**

Hello Maryland, Delaware, and DC chestnutters. After weeks of "Snow-Crete" and subfreezing temperatures, spring has finally arrived. Our growing season began on February 7 with the planting of chestnut seed nuts at the Baltimore County Agriculture Center greenhouse. Despite the single-digit windchill outside, it felt like a warm spring day inside the greenhouse.

Once the snow melted, we resumed orchard maintenance including seasonal culling of trees that lack sufficient blight resistance. We switch our focus to weeding, watering, and grass cutting as the growing season gets underway. I also recently attended the American Chestnut National Foundation Spring Meeting in Abingdon, VA, where chapters and the national staff met to discuss the past year's activities and plan for future work.

Our own chapter's spring meeting is coming up in less than two weeks. It will be held on Saturday, April 25, from 12:00 PM to 3:00 PM at Milkhouse Brewery, 8253 Dollyhyde Road, Mt. Airy, Maryland 21771. More details and fun stuff can be found below.

Gary Carver  
Jim Curtis  
David Gordon  
Ron Kuipers  
Bruce Levine  
Karl Mech  
Susan Proper  
Chuck Selden  
Tony Sutton  
Tom Vegella  
Dean Yap  
Jeffrey Strathern  
Scott Stewart

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Chestnut seedlings at TACF's Meadowview Research farms.

## **NEWS FLASH!!!**

## **NEWS FLASH!!!**

**Please join us for the Maryland Chapter Spring Meeting to receive updates on the restoration of the American Chestnut**

**Saturday April 25 12 PM - 3 PM**

The event will take place at Milkhouse Brewery, where we will host guest speakers, provide a tree-planting demonstration, and enjoy the company of fellow enthusiasts.

- **Event Details - Location: Milkhouse Brewery, 8253 Dollyhyde Road, Mt. Airy, MD 21171 - Day: Saturday, April 25 - Time: 12:00 AM – 3:00 PM - Admission: Free (Family-friendly)**
- **Featured Presentations -**
  - **"What fungal genetics can tell us about resistance" by Bruce Levine (University of Maryland).**
  - **"The Return of a Forest Icon: Strategies for Restoring Castanea dentata" by Cassie Stark (TACF).**

**Agenda:**

- ○ 11:30 AM – 12:00 PM: Pre meeting set up -
  - ○ 12:00 PM - 12:30 PM: Business Meeting -
  - ○ 12:30 PM – 1:30 PM: Presentations by Bruce Levine and Cassie Stark -
  - ○ 1:30 PM – 2:00 PM: Chestnut tree planting demonstration -
  - ○ 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM: Networking, seedling sales, and chapter apparel sales
- The meeting will be held in the covered pavilion. The brewery opens at 12:00 PM and will feature a food truck and a special tap of our chestnut lager. Come for the great company and talk about chestnuts
  - For more information on the brewery, please visit Milkhouse Brewery (<https://www.milkhousebrewery.com>). Chestnut questions, contact MDTACF at MDChapter@tacf.org. We look forward to seeing you there!



The Maryland Chapter ball caps will be available for purchase.



We will have a limited quantity of chapter apparel for sale, including, hoodies, t-shirts, and ball caps.

**In Staff News...**

Meet Kaitlyn Harless, our new TACF Mid Atlantic Regional Science MD Coordinator. Kaitlyn will be visiting in the near future for a tour of our orchards.

Kaitlyn joined TACF in 2026 as the Mid-Atlantic Regional Science Coordinator. She obtained her B.S. in Biology in 2019 from James Madison University and later earned a M.S. in Biology in 2025 from Virginia Commonwealth University, where she researched where she researched plant communities on Barrier Islands.

Prior to joining TACF she worked for the Virginia Department of Forestry as both an Invasive Species Technician and Research Technician, where she helped compile inventories of plant species within Virginia State Forests and conducted statistical analysis on white oak progeny



tests. She has also previously worked at the United States Forest Service, conducting Forest Inventory and Analysis surveys in California. In her free time, Kaitlyn enjoys spending time with her cats, getting outside to rock climb, and learning how to do pottery.

### **Starting Chestnuts!**

Our season starts with starting seeds in greenhouse space we rent from the Baltimore County Agriculture Center. We have space to start approximately 1000 seedlings

On Saturday, February 7th, about 30 volunteers met at the Baltimore County Ag Center greenhouse to plant seed nuts in tall pots. These nuts included various crosses between American chestnuts and Chinese chestnuts as well as some pure Americans. During the summer and fall these chestnuts will be evaluated for blight resistance and only the best will be planted in our orchards. Some plants will be saved for sales and giveaways to members. Many thanks to all of the volunteers, with a special thanks to the students from Loyola University.





The assembly line, filling pots with potting mix.



The second assembly line. Thanks to all the Loyola University students.



TACF President and CEO, Michael Goergen, and his wife, Mila, are assisting with the planting.



The last step is watering, thanks Jim.

## Orchard News

### Serious Pruning at our Ft Detrick Orchard

We spent several 'rewarding' workdays at our Ft Detrick orchard, working together to cut down trees that didn't meet our requirements. With dozens of large piles of limbs and about 100 stumps, we realized we could use some professional help. Bringing in a commercial landscaping crew to chip the piles of tree limbs and grind the stumps made all the difference and saved us. Now, we're left with an orchard full of our best-performing trees and a space that's easy to mow and a pleasure to see.

Right, one of our better trees at Fort Detrick





### **Working at our Ft Detrick Orchard**

Chipping brush piles and grinding stumps.

### **Next on the to do list...**

**Lyles Orchard is near the Triadelphia Reservoir on WSSC property and is one of our backcross orchards.**

Many thanks to the volunteers who showed up to cull trees from Lyles Orchard. Together, we successfully cut down and hauled out approximately 40 trees of various sizes for the wood chipper to grind and dispose of.



**Lyles orchard crew, we love our volunteers. Some of us continued the fun by going to lunch together.**

### **On to Black Hills...**

**Cleaning Up the Black Hill Orchard** -Montgomery College students learned about chestnuts and helped maintain our orchard at Black Hill Regional Park on February 27. The work crew hauled out deadwood and clipped away vines, leaving the trees ready for the next growing season.



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**We are always planting trees somewhere.**

The Town of Mount Airy and the Maryland Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation will be hosting a tree planting on May 12 at 2 p.m. in the Mount Airy Community Garden, 714 Rising Ridge Rd.

The new American Chestnut trees will be joining the Town's food forest which includes a variety of fruit trees, berry bushes, herbs, and perennial vegetables, carefully selected to thrive in our region.

This event, which is free and open to the public, is part of the Town's America 250th celebration.

Come out and join us!



**American  
Chestnut  
Tree  
Planting**

**May 12  
2 pm.  
Mount Airy  
Community  
Garden.  
714 Rising Ridge  
Rd.**

**Town of Mount Airy & Maryland  
Chapter of the American Chestnut  
Foundation**

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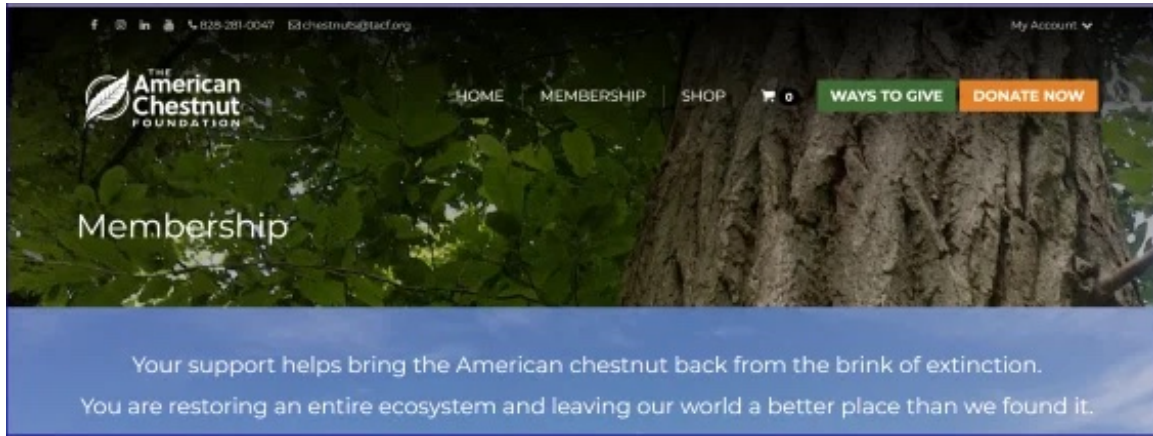
In closing, we would like to thank our new members that have joined in January. We are running late on the reports for February and March. Let me know if I missed you, sometimes reports are late. I am only using first names to respect privacy.

New Members and Donors include: Ron, Barbara, Robert, Stephen, Abraham, Alec, Ronald, Richard, Mike, Isabel

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

If not a member, please renew or 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...

Join Us



## Maryland Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation

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