

Free Membership With The American Chestnut Foundation for Students at VT and NH Institutions of Higher Education

What is the most important tree that ever grew in eastern U.S. forests?

American chestnut, *Castanea dentata*

Why was it so important?

- One of the largest trees in the eastern U.S.; measuring 6-8' diameter at breast height (DBH).
- The tree once dominated portion of the forest across its native range of 200 million acres.
- A wide diversity of wildlife consumed its nuts as an important food source.
- Livestock was fed by foraging for American chestnuts.
- It was an important traditional human food source .

How was the wood used?

- Lumber was light-weight, strong, rot-resistant and resisted warping.
- The wood was used for furniture making.
- Bridge and railroad construction depended on the strength of the wood.
- Tannin extracted from the wood was used to make leather.

Have you ever seen a large American chestnut tree in the forest?

Probably not! It has been nearly driven to extinction by a fungal disease, chestnut blight, caused by the pathogen *Cryphonectria parasitica*. Small sprouts from stumps is typically all that is found.

Has this magnificent tree been able to survive the blight?

American Chestnut sprouts still grow across the historic range but they eventually succumb to chestnut blight. A very small percentage of these trees live long enough to produce nuts.

Is there hope for restoring the American chestnut tree to eastern U.S. forests?

Yes, The American Chestnut Foundation, working with SUNY-ESF (Syracuse), has developed a blight-tolerant American chestnut. You can learn more here: <https://www.esf.edu/chestnut/> and <https://tinyurl.com/ACFrestoration>

What are the priorities for American chestnut restoration in VT/NH?

We need your help to locate wild, flowering American chestnut trees. We will harvest and plant their nuts to grow trees that preserve genetic diversity for use in future breeding programs.

How can you get involved?

Take advantage of the VT/NH Chapter Free Student Membership offer by completing and submitting the enclosed application form and participate in chestnut restoration activities. Learn more at: acf.org. Also, look at the VT/NH Chapter web site that can be accessed at: acf.org/vt-nh.



Chestnut leaf, serrated margins



Chestnut sprout



Chestnut flowers



Chestnut burs with nuts