

THE AMERICAN CHESTNUT FOUNDATION

ANNUAL
REPORT

July 1, 2024 —
June 30, 2025

WORKING TOWARDS SUCCESS

TO SURVIVE, COMPETE, AND REPRODUCE IN EASTERN US FORESTS



THE
American
Chestnut
FOUNDATION

THE AMERICAN CHESTNUT FOUNDATION

REFLECTIONS ON A TRANSFORMATIVE YEAR

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Dear Colleagues and Friends:

As I reflect on the past year at The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF), I am deeply inspired, not only by the resilience of the American chestnut tree, but also by this dedicated community. Together, we have demonstrated an unwavering commitment to restore the American chestnut to its native range. The 2024-2025 fiscal year stands out as a time when we began effectively rebuilding our organization, even as we continued to move forward. Through significant leadership changes and a renewed focus on science, we have strengthened our efforts and set a firm course for the future.



2025 brought about a transition in leadership, with interim CEO Bruce Levine guiding the organization. Under his direction, the Board approved the 2025-2027 strategic plan, marking a pivotal step in TACF's journey. Our dedicated staff promptly began implementing this plan, further demonstrating our commitment to the science and mission of American chestnut restoration.

TACF's scientific endeavors have made significant progress on multiple fronts, guided by the expert recommendations of the Research Advisory Committee. Notably, TACF established a valuable partnership with NC State University's Tree Improvement Program. This collaboration has been crucial, providing the critical information needed to strengthen our breeding program, with a focus on genetic diversity, disease resistance, and height growth.

Additionally, TACF hosted its first biotechnology summit. Leading

experts working with innovative technologies and approaches came together across different systems to explore their potential for enhancing disease resistance. From this summit, the group identified four promising directions for future research, which are being pursued alongside our ongoing breeding program.

We are also working closely with chapters, members, and volunteers to enhance and expand our restoration initiatives, ensuring broader and more effective impact across our programs.

Beyond these scientific achievements, we have experienced growth in both membership and revenue. Generosity from a dedicated group of donors has kept us financially on track, providing the resources necessary to sustain our mission and programs. We also proudly established a new New York Chapter Board, who will further support and expand our restoration efforts.

All these accomplishments have been made possible by the dedication of everyone who believes in TACF. With the appointment of our new CEO, Michael Georgen, I am confident that we are moving forward as a sustainable, resilient, and mission-driven organization. The future of the American chestnut is indeed bright, and together, we will continue to make meaningful progress toward its historical comeback.

With best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Liz Kramer".

Liz Kramer, Board of Directors Chair
The American Chestnut Foundation

ACCELERATING GAINS

BY DR. JARED WESTBROOK, DIRECTOR OF SCIENCE

IN DISEASE RESISTANCE AND FOREST COMPETITIVENESS THROUGH GENOME-ENABLED BREEDING

Success in American chestnut (*Castanea dentata*) restoration depends on developing a population of trees with enough blight resistance and height growth potential to survive, compete, and reproduce in eastern forests. A subset of the population should also have resistance to *Phytophthora* root rot, especially in the southern portion of the range, where this disease is most prevalent. Finally, the population should have sufficient genetic diversity to adapt to a wide geographic range and a changing climate.

Our breeding program aims to meet these objectives by breeding a diverse population of *C. dentata* hybrids with above-average disease resistance and height growth, and selecting progeny that show

further improvement in these traits. To speed up the selection of superior progeny, we are incorporating genomic selection to predict trees' disease resistance and height growth. Genomic selection involves

genotyping seedlings to predict the genetic component of disease resistance and growth from a weighted average of relatives' phenotypes. The practical benefit of genomic selection is that it allows us to select the predicted top-performing trees as seedlings and plant them together in seed orchards, where they are expected to produce large quantities of open-pollinated seed for restoration plantings over the next 7 to 15 years (Figure 1).

Accurate genomic selection depends on genotyping and phenotyping close relatives of the population targeted for selection. To incorporate close relatives into our genomic selection training populations, we inoculated and genotyped full-sibling



TACF Tree Improvement Scientist Lucinda Wigfield performing a controlled pollination with progeny of large surviving American chestnut to evaluate the level of heritable blight resistance in *C. dentata* populations.

seedlings from the population undergoing genomic selection. In 2025, we genotyped 5,808 seedlings, of which 1,250 from 48 families were inoculated with the chestnut blight fungus, and ~350 seedlings from 18 families were inoculated with the pathogen that causes phytophthora root rot. We will use the disease-resistance phenotypes of these relatives to predict the resistance of trees that are genotyped but not yet inoculated. Seedling inoculation also enables us to prioritize families with above-average disease resistance from which to perform genomic selection of the most resistant individuals for seed orchard plantings. In our seedling assays for blight resistance, we identified 15 hybrid families where the two parents had majority (>70%) *C. dentata* ancestry and elevated average resistance values

ranging from 25 to 69 (average 39) on a scale of 0 (average of susceptible *C. dentata*) to 100 (average of resistant Chinese chestnuts) (Figure 2). We plan to plant individuals within the highest predicted resistance from these families in three seed orchard locations in North Carolina, Virginia, and Pennsylvania in the Spring of 2026.

Trees not selected for seed orchards will be planted in progeny tests. Progeny tests improve genomic selection models for the next breeding cycle by training prediction models on long-term resistance phenotypes from field-grown trees (Figure 1). Furthermore, we expect that among trees planted within progeny tests, some will exhibit superior disease resistance and growth and could be incorporated as parents into the next breeding

FIGURE 1

A. Diagram of one cycle of recurrent genomic selection for improved blight resistance, root rot resistance, and height growth while maintaining >70% *C. dentata* ancestry. The top 20% with the greatest predicted performance based on genomic data will be planted in seed orchards. Remaining trees will be planted in progeny tests or inoculated as seedlings. The dotted line indicates that resistance values of close relatives will be used to train genomic selection models.

B. Predicted genetic gains from one generation of genomic selection. Gains were predicted for two breeding tracks where controlled crosses are conducted 1) between parents with above average blight resistance (>70, on a scale of 0 = susceptible *C. dentata* to 100 = resistant *C. mollissima* scale) and height growth (>70th percentile) or 2) parents that balance improved blight resistance (>60), root rot resistance (>40), and height growth. The yellow and blue violin plots depict genetic variation among 20% of the trees selected via genomic data relative to the current population (orange) of surviving trees.

FIGURE 1A. DIAGRAM OF RGS PROGRAM

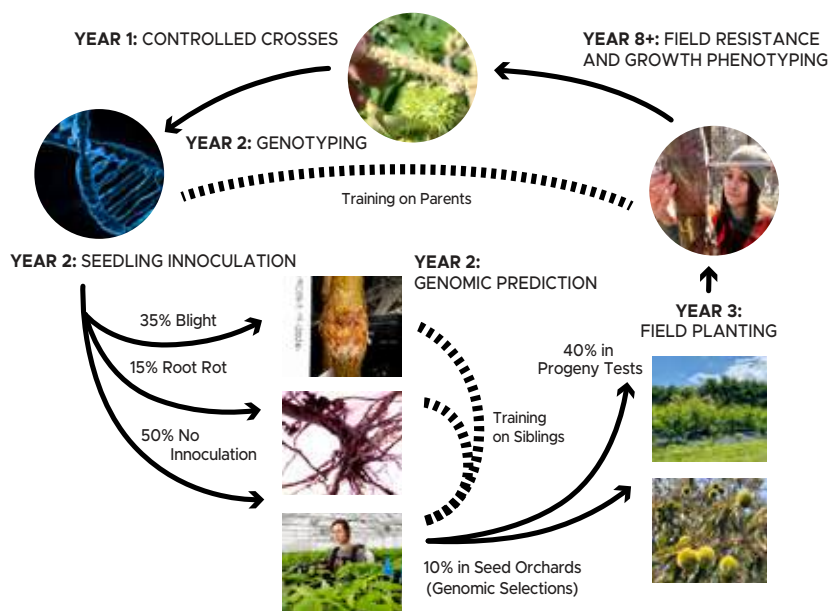
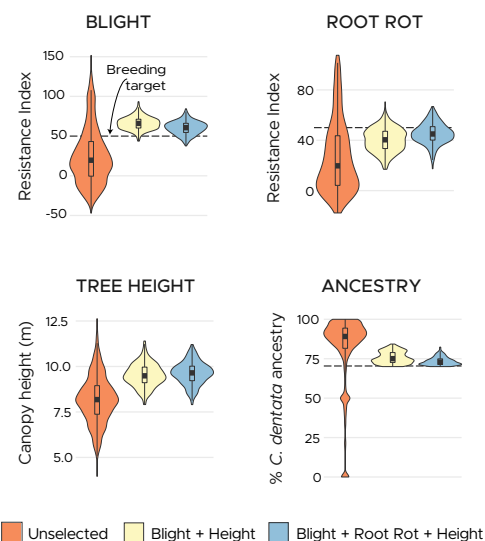


FIGURE 1B. PREDICTED GAINS IN THE FIRST RGS CYCLE



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TACF New England Regional Science Coordinator Deni Ranguelova standing next to the 'Graves' tree, one the original sources of resistance used for TACF's hybrid breeding program.

cycle. In 2025, we planted 1,085 genotyped trees in three progeny test sites in Virginia and Tennessee. In 2026, we will plant up to 2,500 additional trees in progeny tests from the genotyping that we performed this year at sites in Michigan, North Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, Pennsylvania, and Maine.

To generate additional seed for genotyping and disease resistance screening in 2026, we performed 81 controlled pollinations in 2025 to generate 6,562 seeds. In addition to making 67 crosses between hybrid selections, we also performed 13 controlled pollinations between descendants of large surviving American chestnuts (LSACs) with putative partial resistance to chestnut blight. Our goal with these crosses is to obtain robust estimates of the level of heritable blight resistance within

non-hybrid *C. dentata* populations. In the 2025 seedling trials for blight resistance, we screened 10 LSAC families and the two most resistant families had low levels of resistance ranging from 16 to 21 (**Figure 2**). A hybrid breeding approach is likely to be necessary to obtain higher levels of blight and root rot resistance over the next decade. Nevertheless, we plan to continue with LSAC breeding. The LSAC families with the greatest blight resistance in seedling trials will be planted in orchards separate from hybrids to continue to improve disease resistance within the native *C. dentata* population.

In addition to genome-enabled breeding, we continue to pursue research into biotechnological strategies to improve disease resistance. Recent collaborative research with HudsonAlpha Institute of Biotech-

FIGURE 2

Blight resistance among 48 families inoculated in seedling trials in 2025 relative to:

- A.** Average *C. dentata* ancestry
- B.** Average blight resistance estimates of the parents. Red dots indicate hybrid and large surviving American chestnut families with majority *C. dentata* ancestry and above-average blight resistance that will be prioritized for seed orchard plantings in 2026.

FIGURE 2A. AVERAGE PARENTAL *C. DENTATA* ANCESTRY

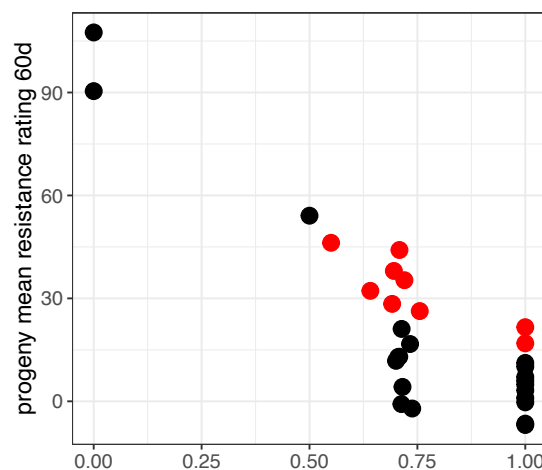
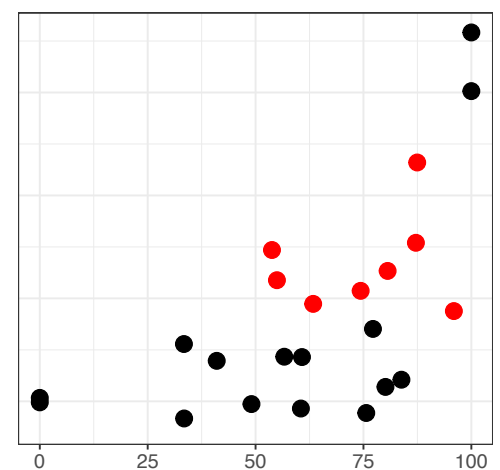


FIGURE 2B. AVERAGE PARENTAL BLIGHT RESISTANCE



THE NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

SCIENCE REPORT

July 1, 2024 —
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nology and Oak Ridge National Laboratory has identified key regions of the genome and metabolites involved in blight resistance. In May 2025, we hosted scientific and industry leaders to help prioritize future research to discover candidate genes and resistance mechanisms, improve genetic transformation and clonal propagation methods, and test innovative approaches to silence genes in blight and root rot pathogens to reduce their virulence.

In this decades-long journey to generate chestnut populations suitable for restoration in eastern forests, we are grateful to our donors including, scientific collaborators, and partners who make this work possible.



TACF southern regional intern Mateo Craven performing chestnut blight inoculations on seedlings at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

1,250

FIRST-YEAR SEEDLINGS from 48 families inoculated with the chestnut blight fungus at three locations (University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, Meadowview Research Farms, and Penn State University)

262

SEEDLINGS selected for seed orchard plantings in Virginia and North Carolina in 2025 based on 2024 genomic data

350

SEEDLINGS from 18 families were inoculated with the pathogen that causes root rot at Clemson University

5,808

TREES genotyped for genomic prediction and hybrid ancestry assessment

1,085

TREES planted in progeny field trials to assess long-term blight resistance

6,538

NUTS FROM CONTROLLED POLLINATIONS between trees with above-average blight and/or root rot resistance. The breakdown of controlled pollinations by region includes:

NEW ENGLAND REGION: 8 crosses, 345 nuts

NORTH CENTRAL REGION: 14 crosses, 2,514 nuts

MID-ATLANTIC REGION: 8 crosses, 600 nuts

MEADOWVIEW RESEARCH FARMS: 24 crosses, 1,374 nuts

SOUTHERN REGION: 27 crosses, 1,729 nuts



TACF Director of Science Implementation Cassie Stark with a *C. dentata* backcross hybrid planted in the John's Creek progeny test in central VA in 2012.

BY DR. VASILIIY LAKOBA, DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH AND RESTORATION

PROGRESS AND PARTNERSHIPS

AT MEADOWVIEW RESEARCH FARMS

The past year has been one of strong, measurable progress at Meadowview Research Farms (MRF), The American Chestnut Foundation's central hub for scientific advancement and field implementation. As the most centralized site driving TACF's recurrent genomic selection (RGS) program, Meadowview continues to serve as the operational backbone of our restoration efforts — linking research, field testing, and community collaboration.

STRENGTHENING RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE

In 2024, Meadowview completed several major upgrades that have expanded its research capacity and improved long-term sustainability.

The most visible achievement was the completion of the new research-grade greenhouse in April 2025, a modern facility funded through the success of TACF's 2023 Spring Appeal and an anonymous major

gift. This greenhouse provides the controlled conditions necessary for propagating high-priority genetic lines and conducting early-stage research critical to the RGS program.

A second milestone was the installation of a solar array that now provides the majority of the farm's power. This investment reduces operational costs and ensures that our facility runs efficiently and sustainably.

To keep pace with evolving scientific methods, Meadowview also modernized its molecular lab, installing updated equipment to prepare for expanded genotyping and biotech applications in future projects. These improvements position the facility to better support genomic research and data-driven breeding for years.



A specimen of *Castanea seguinii* displaying both catkins and burs in the Castanetum — or collection of chestnut and chinquapin species — at Meadowview Research Farms.

ADVANCING THE RECURRENT GENOMIC SELECTION PIPELINE

Meadowview remains the engine of TACF's RGS program, which integrates traditional breeding with genomic data to identify and propagate the most promising American chestnut candidates. In April and May of 2025, the team successfully established the RGS 2024 seed orchard and progeny test on the Duncan and Price farms, respectively, adding critical new material for future evaluation.

The RGS 2025 and subsequent cohort is growing well and represent a substantial increase in the size and diversity of genomically selected trees in TACF's program. Each year, Meadowview processes and coordinates genetic material for the entire organization, serving as the central clearinghouse for roughly 6,000 leaf

samples collected nationwide. These samples are prepared and shipped to Diversity Arrays Technology (DArT) in Australia for genotyping, with results feeding back into our selection models that guide future breeding work.

SKILLED STAFF AND COLLABORATIVE SUPPORT

The continued success of Meadowview's program depends on a capable and experienced team. Dan McKinnon, TACF's longest-serving staff member, and Jim Tolton lead the land management and orchard operations, providing consistency and expertise across hundreds of acres of research orchards. Tree Improvement Scientist Lucinda Wigfield, now in her second year, oversaw another productive breeding and harvest season and has taken on expanded

leadership responsibilities across multiple orchard projects.

Nursery Manager Brian Henrich has stepped into a multifaceted role that includes nursery propagation, high-light pollen forcing, harvest processing, and volunteer coordination, ensuring that all nursery and orchard workflows operate efficiently and effectively.

MRF's capacity is further strengthened by partnerships within the local community and beyond. In 2024, two full-time summer interns, Zoe Smutko and Talya Drazen, joined the team following a national recruitment process funded by the Felburn Foundation. We were later rejoined by experienced Bonner Scholars from Emory & Henry University, Gabbie Iadevaio and Maddy Rossi-Dupas, who provided valuable field, nursery,



In its second growing season, the Meadowview replicate of the 2024 Common Garden Experiment (other sites in MD, PA, and RI) will be an important source of data on both local adaptation and parental selection efficacy.

MEADOWVIEW RESEARCH FARMS



A molting ladybug larva stands guard against aphids and other pests among the nursery seedlings at Meadowview.

and outreach assistance throughout the spring and fall semesters. Meadowview also continues to collaborate with Dr. Han Chuan Ong's class from King University, whose students assist each year during the harvest, gaining hands-on experience while contributing meaningfully to Meadowview's work.

These partnerships allow a core staff to accomplish an impressive amount of work each season, expanding Meadowview's reach and impact while providing valuable educational experiences for the next generation of scientists and conservationists.

LOOKING AHEAD

With upgraded infrastructure, growing research capacity, and a strong network of collaborators, Meadowview Research Farms is well positioned to continue leading

TACF's applied research efforts. The facility remains the testing ground where scientific progress and practical restoration meet — advancing the development of healthy, regionally adapted American chestnut trees for future forests.

Supporters and members are encouraged to visit Meadowview Research Farms by appointment with Vasiliy Lakoba (vasiliy.lakoba@tacf.org) to see TACF's science in action. Tours provide a firsthand look at how these collective investments — facilities, people, and partnerships — are moving restoration forward, one growing season at a time.



A cohort of seedlings in their first weeks under high light treatment for pollen forcing in the Thomson greenhouse at Meadowview.



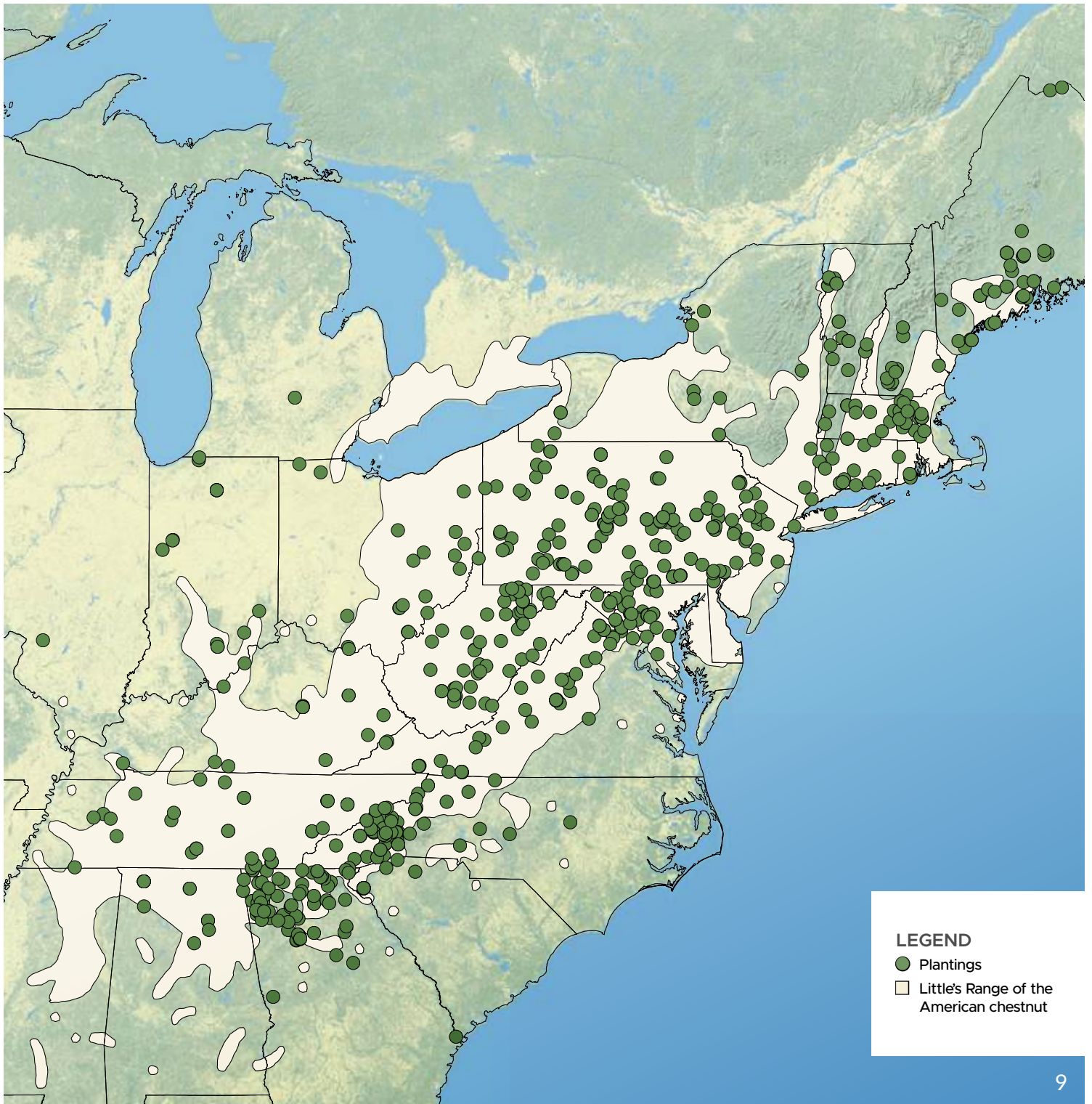
2025's recurrent genomic selection cohort has completed a growing season in the MRF nursery before being allocated to seed orchards, pollen forcing, and progeny testing in 2026.

A VITAL ROLE IN RESTORATION

REGIONAL
REPORTS

July 1, 2024 —
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EXECUTED BY THOUSANDS OF VOLUNTEERS ACROSS 16 CHAPTERS



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The restoration of the American chestnut is made possible through the dedication of an extraordinary network of chapter volunteers. From establishing new plantings and caring for research orchards to engaging communities through education and outreach, these individuals contribute thousands of hours to advancing TACF's mission and preserving the legacy of this iconic tree.

New England Region

CT CHAPTER

- Collected more than 2,500 wild American chestnuts during the 2024 harvest for GCO planting and TACF's Annual Wild-Type Sale.
- Began the Chapter's first recurrent genomic selection (RGS) controlled crosses in June 2025, selecting six

parent trees from Woodbridge, Wigwam Brook, and Swann Farm orchards.

- Planted two new germplasm conservation orchards (GCOs) in Spring 2025 and added 145 trees to seven existing GCOs.
- Maintained and improved multiple orchards through fencing, maintenance, site prep, and transplanting

work, supported by volunteer labor across the season.

- Delivered outreach and education at fairs, garden clubs, heritage walks, and TV segments, reaching hundreds of attendees across Connecticut.
- Hosted TACF's Chestnut Symposium in Cromwell, CT (Oct 23–26, 2024), featuring slash wall enclosure walks and tours of the CT Agricultural Experiment Station orchards at Lockwood Farm and Sleeping Giant State Park.

MA/RI CHAPTER

- Planted more than 100 American chestnut trees in multiple locations throughout MA.
- Discovered four flowering American chestnut trees at Borderland State Park and led a hike for the Wrentham Conservation Commis-

NEW ENGLAND CHESTNUTS PLANTED: 3,403 ■ VOLUNTEERS: 189 ■ ATTENDEES/BENEFICIARIES: 12,640



sion where a healthy wild American chestnut was spotted.

- Delivered 26 seedlings to Somerset Sportsmen's Club for a planting, 25 seedlings to the Fall River Water Department for an orchard at a farm purchased by the city, and a mix of 20 seedlings (American, Asian, and hybrids) to Newport Vineyards.
- Performed maintenance on trees at the Flint Field GCO in Lincoln, Edith Read Conservation Area in Norton, Highland and WWI Parks in North Attleboro, Wheaton Farm Conservation Area and Borderland State Park, both in Easton.
- Participated in a 2025 spring Arbor Day event in Attleboro, trained University of Rhode Island master gardeners and interns on pollinations, led a chestnut walk at Bor-

derland State Park with members of the Easton Conservation Commission, and collaborated with the same group to plant seedlings at Wheaton Farm Conservation Area.

- Harvested nuts and conducted maintenance on trees planted years ago by Rufin Van Bossuyt, a long-time dedicated Chapter member, advisor, and mentor, who passed away in 2026.
- Delivered educational presentations on American chestnut at the Norton and Easton Conservation Commissions.
- Harvested more than 1,200 nuts.

ME CHAPTER

- Completed major wild American chestnut harvests, collecting more than 5,800 nuts from sites across Enfield, Monroe, Stockton Springs,

Hampden, Orono, Ellsworth, Unity, and Belfast.

- Ran extensive Chestnuts Across Maine programming throughout the year, partnering with schools, land trusts, Maine Audubon, and community groups for education, planting, and outreach.
- Conducted significant greenhouse and seedling operations, including seed sales, prep work, potting, and an annual seed-planting party involving 1,400 seeds.
- Performed ongoing orchard and restoration work across multiple locations: bagging flowers, pollination, orchard reviews, germplasm conservation, fencing, site prep, and RGS program activities.
- Delivered a large slate of community events, including Fryeburg Fair (multi-day, high-attendance), Natural



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Resources Conservation Service workshops, WildFed TV segments, forestry classes, plant sales, and the annual Chapter meeting.

- Maintained strong governance and committee activity, including board meetings, Outreach Committee meetings, executive business sessions, and coordination with TACF governance and regional science committees.

VT/NH CHAPTER

- Supported the establishment of two RGS Progeny Test plantings, including collecting RGS nuts and planting 296 germinated nuts in Goshen, VT on May 28, 2025, representing 17 selections, plus American and Chinese chestnut sources.
- Advanced work at the Windsor GCO (VT) and New London GCO (NH) through planting, maintenance,

mowing, fencing, installing deer-exclusion shelters, and competition mat installation.

- Managed extensive nut-related activities, including nut collection, shucking, cleaning, and free nut distribution across VT and NH.
- Completed the establishment of a new GCO in New London, alongside continued maintenance and planting of harvested nuts.
- Delivered community outreach events, including presentations for the Grantham Conservation Commission, the VT Wildlife Festival, and NH Farm, Forest & Garden Expo.
- Strengthened partnerships with conservation commissions, USFS, state agencies, and private groups, supporting coordinated TACF activities across VT and NH.

North Central Region

IN CHAPTER

- Conducted Chapter Annual Meeting under the state champion American chestnut tree in Roselawn, IN. This followed a massive effort to collect nuts from this isolated grove of American chestnuts, which recently contracted the blight.
- In spring 2025, Chapter members gathered at Potawatomi Park to control invasive species, rate existing B_3F_2 hybrids, and interplant novel F_1 hybrids among B_3F_2 hybrids to assist re-forestation and provide additional sources of resistance. Pollen was also collected from the Jackson-Washington State Forest for future use.



OH CHAPTER

- Planted more than 5,000 American chestnut seedlings across 25+ locations in partnership with state parks, forests, and community groups.
- Collected and sold more than 250 chestnuts to Ohio Chapter members, raising awareness and support for restoration.
- Maintained an active Facebook presence to engage the local community and share restoration updates.
- Expanded membership and outreach, connecting with new supporters and locating wild American chestnuts.
- Funded three Ohio mini-grants supporting education projects statewide and restoration.

- Continued orchard maintenance, nut collection, and pollination work across key restoration sites, including Mohican State Forest, The Wilds, and Cuyahoga National Park.

PA/NJ CHAPTER

- Updated Chapter website to a more professional, engaging, user-friendly site including blog, store, and volunteer events calendar.
- Updated e-newsletters to a modern, engaging design.
- Implemented new Chapter logo across website, social media accounts, merchandise, etc.
- Redesigned Chapter t-shirts to include new logo and updated online store on website.
- Updated outreach table setup to include new branded tablecloth and runner.

- Increased overall social media engagement by sharing more of the Chapter's processes, facilities, and happenings. Videos featuring North Central Regional Science Coordinator Lake Graboski and Orchard Manager Noah Vincent performed well.
- Transitioned from Sign-Up Genius to Volunteer Local for online volunteer sign-ups for a more consistent, streamlined experience.
- With the help of several larger donations, made infrastructure improvements to the PSU orchard fence and PSU hoop house.

NORTH CENTRAL CHESTNUTS PLANTED: 10,987 ■ VOLUNTEERS: 432 ■ ATTENDEES/BENEFICIARIES: 20,425



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Mid Atlantic Region

KY CHAPTER

- Planted 27 additional American chestnut seedlings at the GCO Orchard, bringing the total to 100 Kentucky-sourced trees.
- Strengthened partnerships with USFS, KY National Guard, Eastern Kentucky University (EKU), UK Forestry, Berea College Forest, and KY Division of Forestry, ensuring skilled support for orchard work.
- Conducted genomic leaf sampling at TACF/EKU Orchard to support RGS tree selection in May 2025.
- Expanded recruitment through a 1,000+ follower Facebook page, an active member communications list, and renewed outreach to former members.

- Collaborated with four Army Corps lake sites to plant or replant hybrid public education orchards at Buckhorn, Carr Creek, Green River, and Beech Fork Lakes.
- Recognized contributors through Volunteer of the Year and Partner of the Year awards, with ECU earning Partner of the Year 2024.

VA CHAPTER

- Managed and maintained numerous orchards statewide, including mowing, culling, vegetation work, inoculations, and fence repairs.
- Supported greenhouse operations through seed sowing, shucking, and ongoing care at Crimora and Meadowview Research Farms.
- Planted 1,948 chestnuts across new and existing orchards, with major plantings at Woodgrove

High School and multiple State forest sites.

- Completed substantial harvests totaling 9,750 chestnuts, including large collections at Lesesne, Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute, Fortunes Cove, and Blandy Farm.
- Conducted a wide range of restoration tasks, including drone imaging, scion collection, vegetation measurement, and orchard assessments.
- Delivered outreach and education through plant sales, park events, meetings, school partnerships, and field trips, reaching at least 182 attendees.

WV CHAPTER

- Hosted an extensive slate of community outreach and educa-

MID ATLANTIC CHESTNUTS PLANTED: 2,121 ■ VOLUNTEERS: 754 ■ ATTENDEES/BENEFICIARIES: 6,622



tion events, including lectures to schools, universities, master gardeners, civic groups, and the Land & Mineral Owners Association, plus participation in fairs and public festivals.

- Published monthly Chapter newsletters (July 2024–June 2025), consistently reaching an audience of ~165 readers each issue.
- Carried out significant restoration and orchard management work, including assessments, monitoring visits, harvests at multiple sites, shucking burs, and a major orchard workday with USFS.
- Completed multiple new orchard plantings, including Alpine Lake water storage tank, The Woods, Berkeley Springs, and Jennings Randolph Lake (with Army Corps of Engineers).

- Supported robust greenhouse operations, such as potting 1,000 nuts, potting backcross material, labeling pots, and numerous member seedling distributions statewide.

- Produced multimedia and outreach assets, including video shoots at Waddell Orchard and an interview for a 3,000-reader magazine article, increasing visibility for the Chapter's mission.

Southern Region

GA CHAPTER

- Conducted extensive breeding and research work, including multiple rounds of Small Stem Assays (SSAs), 90-day canker measurements, RGS pollination, and contributions to the Best x Best and

RGS breeding programs at Berry College and partner institutions.

- Performed major orchard operations across Flint, Berry, Henry, Richards, Oak Hill, Bottomlands, Lake Allatoona, and Hurricane Creek, including blight evaluations, culling, direct-seeding projects, PRR control treatments, maintenance, and a large multi-site harvest of 1,643 nuts.
- Strengthened public engagement, membership, and donor support through Chestnutoberfest, seed/seedling sales, tabling events, and recurring outreach across the state.
- Delivered a robust calendar of community outreach events, including Chestnutoberfest, multiple educational presentations, tabling events, film screenings, scout programs, fairs, and a widely



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broadcast WRGA live radio interview reaching approximately 10,000 listeners.

- Managed significant seed and seedling distribution, including providing ~1,200 seeds to orchard stewards and agencies, hosting a large seedling distribution event, and running the “Seeds for Donors” program.
- Maintained strong Chapter governance, formally adopting new bylaws and establishing three standing committees (Finance, Governance, and Resource Development) plus an ad hoc Restoration Committee.

TN CHAPTER

- Collected pollen and performed RGS-directed crosses in Tennessee backcross orchards and with wild trees: 27 crosses in 2024 and 19 crosses in 2025. Some pollen was shared with other chapters in the south or preserved.
- Inoculated first-year seedlings with *Cryphonectria parasitica* to screen for chestnut blight resistance. Cankers were measured and family averages were used for heritability predictions. Notable corky bark phenotype observed in OXO+ seedlings in 2024; OXO-progeny showed smaller cankers but unusual corky bark.
- In fall 2024, volunteers from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga processed nearly 21,000 seeds at the Fortwood Street Greenhouse & Nursery.
- Continued monthly operations in greenhouse maintenance and administrative work, and led several community events such as Trails & Trilliums Festival, Darwin's Day, and others.
- Conducted ongoing RGS breeding processes at Fortwood Street Greenhouse & Nursery.
- Assessed crosses, harvested seeds, and planted and pollinated trees at multiple sites in the State.

SOUTHERN CHESTNUTS PLANTED: 910 ■ VOLUNTEERS: 859 ■ ATTENDEES/BENEFICIARIES: 11,776





BECAUSE OF YOUR SUPPORT

Every step toward restoring the American chestnut is made possible by the generosity of individuals, families, foundations, and organizations that share our vision. This support fuels groundbreaking research, orchard development, and educational outreach throughout TACF’s 16 state chapters. The donors recognized here are helping to create a future where this iconic tree will be celebrated once again for its economic and ecological value. We are deeply grateful for these committed stewards and invite others to join us in this hopeful and monumental mission.

\$100,000+

ANONYMOUS
LAWRENCE KANE
CHARLES P. MCQUAID
BRADFORD STANBACK
AND SHELLI LODGE-STANBACK

\$25,000 – \$99,999

ANONYMOUS
KENNETH J. ADAMS
BETTY AND JOHN ALLISON
ROBERT H. DUNLAP
HJD FOUNDATION
RUFIN VAN BOSSUYT
AND RENA RICHARD

\$10,000 – \$24,999

ANONYMOUS
ROSS BROADWAY
SHELDON CAMPBELL
ROBERT L. DIEHL
DR. JOHN D. HEMPEL
WANDA AND
PHILLIP JOHN
BARRY KRIEDEL
CHARLES G.
MACKALL, JR.

CATHERINE A.
NOVELLI AND DAVID
J. APOL
MR. AND MRS. FRED
STANBACK, JR.
RICHARD BOUCHER
GREGORY PALMER
W. MANCEAUX AND
M. MANCEAUX

\$5,000 – \$9,999

ANONYMOUS
PATRICK BOYLE
CATHERINE AND
OREN CHEYETTE
SUSAN GIESEMANN
NORTH
KAREN HOWAT
NICHOLAS MARS
JACK MCKEE
KRISTINE MERRITT
ANDREW MORTON
MANCI AND GEORGE
L. OHRSTROM II

GREGORY PALMER
ELEANOR AND TOM
RATCHFORD
ALISON RICH
TIMOTHY SHERWIN
THE DANIELS FAMILY
FUND
THE PIERSON FAMILY
FUND

THE AMERICAN CHESTNUT FOUNDATION

\$1,000 – \$4,999

Anonymous	Helen Hansel	Jeffrey Morelli	Byron and Nancy Stutzman
Arnold Abel	Thomas Harbin	Jack D. Morris	G.K. and Shirley Sutton
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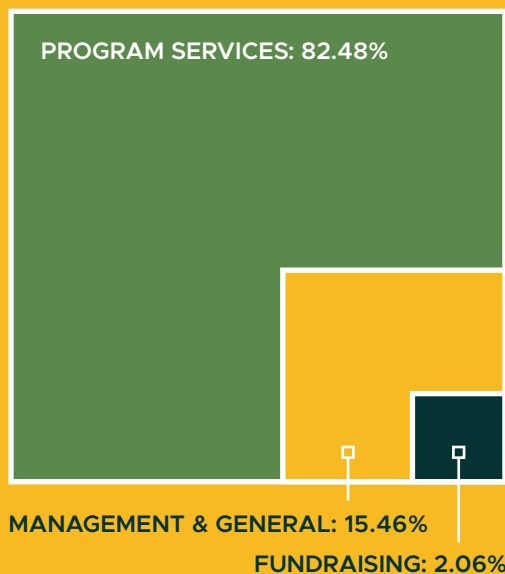
		% Income
Contributions	\$2,762,921	79.21%
Membership Dues	526,372	15.09%
Federal Grants	10,765	0.31%
Investment Income, Net	141,757	4.06%
Merchandise Sales	24,839	0.71%
Annual Meeting	9,763	0.28%
Other Income	11,844	0.34%
TOTAL REVENUE	\$3,488,261	

EXPENSES

PROGRAM SERVICES		% Expense
National Office Operations	\$752,941	19.34%
Marketing & Communications	246,051	6.32%
Science & Research	1,176,419	30.22%
Chapter & Membership	337,387	8.67%
Research Farm Operations	698,052	17.93%
Total Program Services	\$3,210,850	82.48%

SUPPORTING SERVICES

Management & General	\$601,794	15.46%
Fundraising	\$80,206	2.06%
Total Supporting Services	\$682,000	17.52%
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$3,892,850	



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11
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