

The

Canadian Sweet Chestnut

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In this issue: - 2011 Annual General Meeting, fall research activities, tree planting in Nova Scotia and more.

2011 Annual General Meeting

The CCC held a successful AGM at the Tim Horton Onondaga Farms facilities on October 22, 2011. The event was attended by approximately 56 people including 12 children. The day was cool and partly cloudy but a perfect day to travel and to enjoy a nursery tour at the conclusion of the meeting. Chairperson Ron Casier opened the meeting at 10:30am by welcoming those in attendance and updating the members and guests on the activities of the CCC over the past year. In the last newsletter it was mentioned that Kelly Schafer won an award for the development of the CCC Outreach video. Dr Greg Boland formally presented Kelly with the Educational Award of the Canadian Phytopathological Society. This award is presented to individuals or groups that produce educational material for students and the public that highlight plant diseases and their control, in this case, the devastating chestnut blight introduced into North America more than 100 years ago.

Terry Anderson presented the minutes from the 2010 AGM and Paul Faires presented the treasurer's report. Dr Adam Dale presented the fall research report (a summary appears later in the newsletter).

A complimentary lunch consisting of turkey sandwiches, salad and desert was served at the Molly Henderson Building for all those in attendance.

Elections were held for Director's positions on the CCC Board. Melanie Sifton's appointment to the Board was confirmed by the membership with no additional changes to the Board for 2011-12.

Guest speaker, Dr Tom Nudds, University of Guelph,



Kelly Schafer, Outreach Co-ordinator receives the Education Award from Greg Boland, Past President of CPS (right) with George Collin, Chair of the Outreach Committee (left).

presented a talk on "Creating effective habitats for endangered species with emphasis on private lands" The talk stimulated considerable discussion among the audience with many questions directed to Tom. A summary of his talk is presented later in the newsletter.

The meeting adjourned after a guided tour of the chestnut nursery.

The Canadian Chestnut Council

The CCC is a scientific and charitable organization with the mission to restore the American chestnut. All its officers volunteer their services both in the field and at the desk. The CCC annual meeting, the web site and this Newsletter dispense information to generate support for saving and restoring this once-important forest tree.

Executive

Chair - Mr. Ron Casier, 45490 Southdale Line
RR # 2, St Thomas, ON N5P 3S6
519-631-5279

D/Chair: - Mr. Murray Alward
Riverbend Farms, Box 31, Port Burwell, ON
N0J 1T0 519-773-5522

Treasurer - Mr. Paul Faires
8724 Wellington Road 18, RR # 5
Belwood, ON N0B 1J0

Secretary -Dr. Terry Anderson (Newsletter Editor)
888 Rd. 3 E., Kingsville, ON N9Y 2E5
519-733-3796

PR Director - Dr. George Collin, 6827 2nd Line RR# 3
Fergus, ON N1M 2W4 519-787-1849

Founder - Dr Collin McKeen, 62 Westmoreland Ave,
Orangeville, ON L9W 3B6 519-941-9513

Board of Directors (by county)

Brant - Mr. John Hill, 254 Glen Morris Rd E
RR # 2 St. George, ON N0E 1N0
519-448-1749
- Mr. Scott Parkinson, 46 Garden Crescent, Paris, ON,
N3L 3T4, 519-442-9076

Essex - Mr. Tom Welacky (Chair, Research Cttee)
527 Lake Drive, Kingsville, ON N9Y 3S6
519-981-4076

York - Melanie Sifton, Humber Arboretum, 205 Humber
College Boulevard, Toronto, ON, M9W 5L7,
416-675-6622 ext 4700

Corresponding and Advisory Directors

Dr Adam Dale, Dept of Plant Agriculture
University of Guelph Box 587, Simcoe, ON
N3Y 4N5 519-426-7127 Ext 333

Dr Greg Boland, School of Environmental Sciences
Room 3234 Bovey Building
University of Guelph, Guelph, ON
N1G 2W1 519-824-4120 Ext 2755

Stewardship Assistant

Ms Kelly Schafer

Honorary Directors

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Dr. Peter Rice, Ottawa, Ontario

Correspondence

Kelly recently received an inquiry from CCC member Dirk Emde. He noted that the chestnut distribution map on our web site and used in our presentations is not complete. He is aware of additional trees that are not included. He is correct. The current map needs updating. The map is based on a 2 year survey conducted by the U of Guelph. The group examined 601 “wild” trees that they did not consider planted. The map includes all 601 trees but because the dots overlap, each tree could not be represented. There are more trees in Ontario that were not surveyed because of time and expense. The complete article can be read on line at Can. J. For. Res. **34**: 2554–2563 (2004). We have received tips on new trees for example in the areas of Richmond Hill, Toronto, Brantford, and Prince Edward County but have not had time to investigate to determine if they are pure American chestnut. In addition there are 24 rural sites that were planted in cooperation with the Ontario Crop Improvement Association with American chestnuts in 1999. We share our site information with the researchers at Guelph and hopefully a new survey will be conducted in the future. It would be interesting to know the current status of those trees surveyed almost 10 years ago.

Kelly recently received an inquiry to obtain a source of chestnuts for roasting and trees for planting from the Ottawa area. Mr Luciano Pradel, began roasting chestnuts a few years ago at the Biward Market. He is proud to stimulate an interest in chestnuts for food and has many memories of chestnuts in his native Italy. He was recently interviewed by the the Ottawa Citizen Please check out the interviews on the following web sites. <http://www.ottawacitizen.com/life/Million+Chestnut+Roaster/5732512/story.html> and http://www.ottawacitizen.com/videos/ottawa-and-area/video.html?embedCode=Y5bzExMzpcezf_3Gia4So2NGBJyH6eEe Luciano is a dedicated enthusiast and he would like to try all sorts of chestnuts. If you are in Ottawa in late fall or Christmas stop by for a chat and some roasted chestnuts. If you have any European or Chinese chestnut seedlings he would love to plant them. His phone number is 613-729-3080.

Summary of Dr Nudds' Talk at the AGM

In the tradition of British common law, wildlife belongs to all people, but the land on which wildlife lives often belongs to individual people. In that sense, the situation with American Sweet Chestnuts is like many species (whether or not they are listed as species-at-risk). It presents a significant challenge to classic approaches to conservation that is exacerbated by recent changes to law and regulations for protecting species-at-risk in Ontario. Historically, natural resources management operated, often non-transparently, and typically in a top-down, command-and-control fashion that frustrated stakeholders because it ignored their uncertainties about local concerns. A different management approach is in various degrees of development across many fields of natural resource management. It embraces stakeholder involvement in more transparent and accountable decision-making that directly addresses key uncertainties that can impede effective conservation, with sound science at its core.

As an example, notwithstanding that there are several key uncertainties about the causes of the decline of bobolinks, its habitat became regulated under Ontario's Endangered Species Act with potentially severe repercussions for routine farming practices. The new approach to collaborative, participatory and adaptive management would see stakeholders undertake key studies together with scientists and policy makers to resolve these uncertainties and learn how bobolinks and farming might better co-exist.

To best facilitate adaptive management, and learn how best to conserve bobolinks and other species-at-risk like chestnut, will require the cooperation of farmers and other landowners whose participation will otherwise be difficult to engage without some form of "safe harbour" agreement from prosecution under the the ESA. Although several "flexibility

tools" were conceived as part of the advice to the Minister to revise the ESA, to date the law and attendant regulations appear to many individual landowners to provide more disincentives than incentives to participate in conservation. It's time to encourage a different approach.



Dr Tom Nudds addresses the CCC membership.

Outreach Activities

In addition to planning the 2011 AGM, Kelly has been involved in organizing and hosting presentations and tours for the CCC.

On August 13-14, Kelly arranged for CCC participation in the Annual Forest Fest, held at St Williams, ON. Dragan Galic and Wes Horley set up the CCC display and Wes manned the display during the event. Forest Fest promotes the environment and tree planting with emphasis on students and Naturalist groups.

In September, 35 students with their instructor from the Niagara Parks Commission visited the CCC nursery at Onondaga Farms. Adam Dale and Kelly hosted the tour and presented the CCC video.

Kelly attended the Latornell Conference in Allison, ON in November and set up the CCC display. The Conference was attended by approximately 900 delegates from numerous conservation groups, government and NGO organizations.

She is currently planning presentations for 2012 with the Peninsula Field Naturalists, March 26, the Haldimand Stewardship Council, April 21 and the Upper Credit Field Naturalists, November 27. Activities at Earth Day, April 22, at Onondaga Farms are always an important opportunity to volunteer and tour the chestnut nursery.



Tim Horton Foundation camp attendees enjoy an educational tour of the CCC chestnut nursery at Onondaga



Above: Measuring blight lesions at Onondaga Farms and left: Excellent chestnut production at Riverbend Farms after two years of early frost, 2011



Research Activities

Fall Activities at Onondaga and Riverbend Farms

During the fall, there were numerous activities in the nurseries. Most important involved the harvesting of nuts resulting from the hand pollinations that were made in June and July. In addition numerous chores are associated with preparing for winter in the nurseries. In the middle of September, Dragan replaced all the mouse bait stations by the young F2 trees at both Onondaga and Riverbend Farms and attached 'Bounce' sheets to them. Deer browse on the young chestnut trees, and we have found that they don't like the smell of 'Bounce' (laundry fabric softener sheets). Consequently, they avoid trees with the attached sheets. Dragan also winterized the irrigation system at Riverbend. All the 'Bounce' sheets were replaced at the end of October.

As a result of on-going changes at Riverbend Farms, all the potted chestnut trees which Murray Alward had propagated were moved and planted at the Simcoe Research Station.

John Hill, Dragan and Adam spent a day at Onondaga removing dead trees. All the sprouts from dead backcross trees were removed, while one shoot was left on the Canadian trees. These are being maintained as a germplasm resource. We have to remember that the Onondaga planting is the largest American chestnut planting in Canada, and American chestnut is an endangered species.

This year gave us a bumper crop of nuts. Adam Dale has been going around telling everyone that since he researches both chestnuts and hazelnuts, he is completely nuts – clearly, he must be.

Dragan and Toktam Taghavi spent two days collecting nuts from the hand pollinated crosses in the two orchards: 2600 nuts at Onondaga farm and 530 nuts at Riverbend Farm, respectively. They also collected 110 nuts from susceptible native chestnuts at the Simcoe Research Station, 85 nuts from chestnut orchard on 13th Concession, Simcoe (unknown blight resistance) and nuts from Colossal chestnut variety at the Simcoe Research Station. The orchard on 13th concession was planted approximately 13 years ago. No blight has been recorded and trees originated from the Grimo Nut Nursery breeding program.

Dragan and his colleagues spent much of the next two weeks removing nuts from their shells and spines from their fingers - we'll leave you to guess which took longer. The nuts are now bagged in sawdust, donated by John Hill, and stored in the coolers at the Simcoe Research Station.

The results from the inoculations which were done in the summer are being analyzed. Initial analyses show that we are seeing the same trends that we have seen in previous years. Both the back-cross and Canadian populations and both sites are behaving similarly. Over the winter, the analyses will be completed and trees selected for the second generation crosses.

As a result of all the work that has been done by Dragan and all the volunteers, we now have to deal with two positive issues - where are we going to plant over 3,000 trees, and who is going to do it. Dragan will be germinating all the nuts in January, and we normally get over 90% germination. So we are going to need acres and many hands in May.

Submitted by Dragan Galic and Adam Dale

(Editor's Note : In the past, we have planted less than 400 trees per year and it has been a major job for the current volunteers.)

Activities at the 2011 Annual General Meeting



Tree planting in Nova Scotia, 2011

I received this photo from Kelly Schafer in October but was too busy to do anything with it until now but it is too important to let it go any longer. I am pleased that there is a dedicated group there that is involved in chestnut recovery. I am not aware of any direct connection with Ontario chestnuts. I think the eastern trees are related to those on the eastern coast of the USA. Apparently two large chestnuts on the Uniacke estate in central N.S. have died. The following note is from Jocelyn Clark, our Honorary Director from P.E.I. who took the photo. It seems chestnut planting and subsequent care are concerns that are universal.

“The lady is Sue Stuart, Les Corkum has the walker, Claude Davidson has the cane and the two lads on the left are from the Uniacke Estate, but I have lost their names. One seedling is from Bill Journey, who gave it to Sue to grow out for the Uniacke tree, the other two are from Les and from Falmouth trees grown from northern Maine seed. Bill's tree is from Nova Scotia seed, Milton, near Liverpool. One piece of good news is that the second Uniacke tree has sent up a stump sprout and it may live. Deer pressure is pretty high, so we wrapped it in a spiral tree guard, which is what we had at the time. I'll see if Les or Claude can find out if it's alive in the spring. It was very starved for light, but the overtopping beech has broken off, so it is getting more light now.” Jocelyn.



Dedicated volunteers planting a replacement chestnut on the Uniacke Estate in central Nova Scotia

The CCC is now on Facebook.....Visit the site and post a question or comment.

http://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Canadian-Chestnut-Council/279156798779681?ref=tn_tnmn#!/pages/The-Canadian-Chestnut-Council/279156798779681?sk=wall

Is my CCC membership paid-up?????

In answer to your questions, the 2012 membership payment covers the period from October 2011 to September 2012. Look at the mailing label on the envelope of this newsletter. If the number 12 appears after your name, you have paid the membership for 2012. THANK YOU!! If the number is 11 or 10, please send \$20 to Treasurer Paul Faires (8724 Wellington Road 18, RR5, Belwood ON N0B 1J0) for your 2012 membership. If your number is 09 or 08, you will receive a caution that the next CCC Newsletter will be your last. Funding of CCC's work to reestablish the American Sweet Chestnut in Canada absolutely depends on support through your annual membership. Funding agencies ask for information regarding active membership numbers before granting funds for CCC's breeding and outreach activities.

CCC Director's Meetings, Aug-Nov 2011

Wednesday, Aug 17. Riverbend Farms.

Chairman, Ron Cassier informed the group that the owner of Riverbend Farms, Mr Harley Hotchkiss, had recently passed away. Ron will discuss future operations and activities at the nursery with the owner's son, John Hotchkiss. A card of sympathy and donation were sent on behalf of the CCC. Plans were made for the CCC,AGM to be held at Tim Horton/ Onondaga Farms. Directors were urged to seek potential new Directors for upcoming nominations. Considerable time was spent discussing fund raising from grants corporations, etc with no concrete suggestions at present. The chestnut nursery reports were presented and accepted by the Board. Dragan Galic reported that a large umber of crosses had been completed in July.

Saturday, Oct 22, Onondaga Farms.

A brief meeting was held prior to the AGM. Ron Casier reported that the MNR had requested a development company in Niagara region to arrange for replacement of 5 American chestnuts slated for removal with 40 new chestnut trees and suggested the CCC as a reliable source.

Dr Dale reported that these trees could be made available by 2014. Details of cost recovery were not discussed at this time.

Plans were made for the Outreach Committee to apply for grants from TDFE and Canada Fisheries and Wildlife for web site development and modification.

Thursday, Nov 17, Simcoe Research Station. This meeting was postponed until January, 2012 because of low attendance.

Volunteering with the CCC

If you wish to volunteer, the rough schedule for field work at the 2 nurseries is as follows:

Planting seedlings and seed.....May 15-30th
Inoculating.....June 5-10th
Bagging and pollinating.....June 20-July 15th
Rating resistance.....Aug 10-15th
Harvesting seed.....Sept-Oct

Do you wish to receive your Newsletter by e-mail ?

Some members have expressed an interest in receiving their Newsletters via e-mail rather than a paper copy. In electronic format the Newsletter is in colour and will arrive more quickly than a paper copy. From the CCC's point of view, e-mail will save financial resources that can be used elsewhere in the CCC budget. If you wish to receive an electronic copy of the Newsletter send your name and e-mail address to the Editor : terry.anderson4497@yahoo.ca

Membership

Membership fees and donations are tax deductible. Please make cheques payable to the Canadian Chestnut Council

Membership Renewal:

Annual subscription = \$20.00 \$ _____

Donations in excess of the annual subscription will be recognized in the Newsletter in the following categories.

(Requests for anonymity will be honoured.)

Gold Leaf: \$1,000 or more
Silver Leaf: \$500-\$999
Bronze Leaf: \$250-\$499
Green Leaf: \$100-\$249
White Leaf: Less than \$100

Donation: \$ _____

Total enclosed: \$ _____

Note: Memberships can be sent to the Secretary or the Treasurer at the addresses listed on page 2