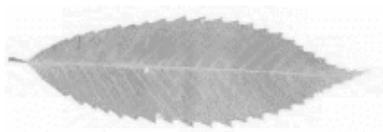


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# Canadian Sweet Chestnut

- Journal of the Canadian Chestnut Council



Issue # 54

August 2010

<http://www.canadianchestnutcouncil.org>

In this issue: - The Open House new Honorary Director...SAR Fund...AGM...Tree Reports...and more!

## CCC Holds September Open House at Riverbend Farms

The Canadian Chestnut Council will hold an Open House on the afternoon of Saturday, 11 September at Riverbend Farms.

From about 12:30 till about 5:00 pm, members as well as all other interested persons will visit the planting site and view the American and hybrid chestnut trees in leaf.

The CCC Board of Directors and Riverbend Farms have planned an educational and entertaining afternoon, all very informal and relaxed.

A barbecue and coffee session will start the afternoon at 12:30 pm, followed by:

- a field tour of CCC trees;
- instructions in planting seedlings;
- the importance of pH;
- hybridization;
- blight tests.

A DVD on the American chestnut tree will be available for viewing. Bring the children!



### Directions to Riverbend Farms

From Highway 401, head south at Exit 216 on County Road 10, through Culloden and Corinth to Highway 3.

Turn right (west) on Highway 3, following signs for Aylmer, 3.8 km.

Turn left (south) onto County Road 38, following signs for Richmond, 2 km.

Turn right onto County Road 43 toward Calton and drive 4.6 km to James Line.

Turn left (east) at James line and drive for 1.5 km.

It's a beautiful, pleasant drive once you leave Highway 401.



### **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  
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8724 Wellington Road 18, RR # 5  
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Secretary - Mr. Charles Hooker, RR # 2, Orangeville,  
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#### **Corresponding and Advisory Directors**

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#### **Stewardship Assistant**

Ms Kelly Schafer

#### **Honorary Directors**

Ms Jocelyn Clarke, Prince Edward Island  
Mr. Leslie Corkum, Falmouth, Nova Scotia  
Mr. Harley Hotchkiss, Calgary, Alberta  
Mr. Arthur Loughton, Vittoria, Ontario  
Dr. Peter Rice, Ottawa, Ontario

## **Editorials**

### **Open House**

It seems that few members ever get the chance to see American chestnut trees in leaf; so the Board of Directors deemed it high time to improve matters.

The Page 1 article invites all who are interested to visit Riverbend Farms and learn how the trees are cared for and tested for blight resistance. It should prove to be a great outing for those whose lives limit their access to the outdoors. You will also see the fruits of our labours and be tutored in the art of tree planting.

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### **Editor Retires**

This will be the last Canadian Sweet Chestnut from your loyal scribe. After nine years and 29 newsletters, one runs out of things to say and must yield to younger minds; and other challenges have arisen. It has been an honour and a privilege to work with the members of the CCC Board, all of whom are all professionals.

So far, no one has expressed interest in entering the competition as successor; so the field is still open. If you have ever wished to practise the art of journalism - good journalism - this forum will give you the opportunity. Write, email, telephone or otherwise advise the Chairman Ron Casier of your intent.

Too often these days we see poor reportage in our newspapers and magazines. This is your chance to retaliate. Show us how it's done. Oh, by the way, the job of Secretary accompanies the Editorship.

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## **Correspondence**

### **From Caledon, Ontario**

I read with interest about the planned outreach program in the April newsletter. I am wondering if you have an e-mail address for Kelly Schafer so that we might contact her regarding a potential presentation at the Wellington Waterloo Wildflower Society, which meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of every month in Guelph.

I think this outreach program will result in new members. I myself became interested in the sweet chestnut after attending such a presentation at the Upper Credit Field Naturalist club in Orangeville given by Dr. McKeen. - Darcie McKelvey

*Dear Darcie:*

*Thanks for your message. ...Kelly...and Dr George Collin are both engaged in the Outreach Program. I'm sure they will be grateful for your invitation and will respond to you.*

*Kelly can be reached through Dr Collin, whose email and smail addresses and telephone number are listed on Page 2 of all newsletters.*

*- Ed.*



# The Outreach Program

## School Visits – Fall 2010 & Spring 2011

The PR Committee is booking meetings, conferences and special events where the CCC will share information on chestnut recovery with interested audiences. Increased exposure promotes greater public awareness of the work being done to save the American chestnut. It is important for the council to attract more members as a condition by various funding sources, including for Trillium grants.

Several conferences are already booked where the CCC will set up our display and talk to the public. Resources such as DVDS and brochures will be distributed, and only a general interest in the American chestnut story is required. Anyone interested in helping out at the CCC display at these events is urged to contact Kelly Schafer. Your help is appreciated, as the small group of dedicated CCC directors cannot attend to all of the scientific work that is required while also manning the booth for the duration of every scheduled event. We hope volunteers will be paired with CCC directors.

September 9-12, RBG – Burlington: North American Bluebird Society Conference.

September 21-25, St Thomas: North American Plow Match.  
October 5-7, Aylmer, Ontario, Jaffa Environmental Education Centre: Carolinian Forest Festival.

As mentioned in previous newsletters, the CCC is interested in speaking to various audiences within the native range of the chestnut. These presentations are of no charge to the group, and members are encouraged to promote the availability of such to organizations you might be part of. The presentation is interactive and interesting, and can be tailored to suit the needs of any group. Contact Kelly Schafer for details: 519-823-1458, [kellys@canadianchestnutcouncil.org](mailto:kellys@canadianchestnutcouncil.org)

A further exciting opportunity is school visits. Kelly Schafer is available to do a handful of school visits this fall as part of her work in developing a resource booklet for students and teachers. Activities are geared to match Ontario Curriculum guidelines, and can be specifically designed to suit different grades. Educators are encouraged to contact Kelly if they would like to have her visit their classroom to enhance learning of specific concepts such as habitats, endangered species, plant growth, seasonal changes in plants, soils or ecosystems. Police-check is available. Providing these nature appreciation activity ideas to teachers is a way for the Canadian Chestnut Council to show its commitment to passing the torch of stewardship on to future generations.

## Meet Our New Honorary Director

Jocelyn Clarke, Prince Edward Island

A considerable number of American chestnut trees grow Down East, in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island - and they are blight free. They must be doing things right!

We also receive considerable sweet chestnut information from that region via Jocelyn Clarke, who is a longtime supporter of the CCC.

There is a need to disseminate CCC information on a local as well as national basis, as provincial regulations and other conditions vary across the nation. The Board of Directors believes that we should start in the Maritimes by appointing local spokespersons there.

To that end, the Board approached Ms Clarke and she agreed to accept appointment as Honorary Director. She is to advise the CCC on Maritime chestnut matters and to encourage sustainment of the American chestnut trees in that region.

Ms Clarke in Prince Edward Island joins Mr Les Corkum of Nova Scotia, who has long been an Honorary Director. The two are personal friends, as readers are surely aware, and work diligently together to advance the goals of the CCC.

The Board is considering the possibility of establishing regional chapters for better solution of local problems, but as yet a form of local organizations is not determined and may not be feasible. However, the blight-free nature of the Maritime region seems to demand some special recognition.

We welcome Jocelyn to the Board and expect we will learn at least as much from her as she will learn from us.



**Honorary Directors  
Jocelyn Clarke and Les Corkum**



# Species at Risk Stewardship Fund Awards Grant to the CCC

## Letter received from Species at Risk Branch, OMNR

Thank you for your application to the 2010/11 Species at Risk Stewardship Fund for the project entitled *Facilitation of Breeding, Inoculation and Propagation to Benefit the American Chestnut Tree*. We received over 170 applications requesting greater than \$8 million.

I am pleased to advise that your application was selected for funding up to a maximum of \$20940. Please note that an authorization under the *Endangered Species Act (2007)* is required and, along with applicable authorizations under other pieces of legislation, must be in place before you begin your project.

A representative from the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) Aylmer District Office will be in contact with you shortly to provide further details specific to your project approval and to develop an agreement for the funding. Your

project start date will be determined as part of the agreement development process. You are advised not to begin your project until you have spoken with your MNR representative.

I wish you every success with your project, and thank you for your contribution towards the protection and recovery of species at risk in Ontario. Please contact Paula Julio, Species at Risk Stewardship Fund Advisor, at 705-755-1208 or [paula.julio@ontario.ca](mailto:paula.julio@ontario.ca) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

*Original Signed by*  
Jason Travers  
Manager, Protection  
Species at Risk Branch

## OMNR Approves Exemption Certificate

The Canadian Chestnut Council has received a Certificate of Exemption from the Ontario government to pursue the development and sustainment of hybrid Asian-American chestnut trees.

The certificate allows the CCC to possess, hybridize, blight-test and breed chestnut trees in accordance with the plan proposed by the CCC.

Specifically, the certificate “authorizes [Chair] Ron Casier and Assistants to engage in the activities as specified and described...that would otherwise be prohibited by s.9(1) of the Endangered Species Act, 2007 in relation to American chestnut (*Castanea dentata*)...

“Harm, collect, possess and transport as is necessary to: Harvest chestnut burs from controlled-cross and open-pollinated trees for the purpose of planting and propagating seedlings in a greenhouse; planting seedlings on approved sites; inoculating experimental trees with blight; maintaining planted trees; collecting scions for grafting; collecting tissue, stem cuttings, root stocks and seed for research and propagation purposes.”

Section 9(1) of the ESA says:

“9(1) No person shall:

(a) kill, harm, harass, capture or take a living member of a species that is listed on the Species at Risk in Ontario list as an extirpated, endangered or threatened species:

(b) possess, transport, collect, buy, sell, lease, trade or offer to buy, sell, lease or trade:

(i) a living or dead member of a species that is listed...

(ii) any part of a living or dead [listed] member...

(iii) anything derived from a living or dead [listed] member..

(c) sell, lease, trade or offer to sell, lease or trade anything that the person represents to be a thing described in subclause (b)(i), (ii) or (iii).”

The certificate of exemption allows the CCC to operate without threat of the punishments specified in the ESA, which could amount to one year in jail and \$250,000 per tree or part of tree affected.

The certificate imposes the following conditions:

“1. Any changes to named assistants shall be identified in writing to [the OMNR] within 24 hours of the change.

“2. The permit holder [Chair, CCC] shall carry a copy of the permit at all times when conducting activities under the authority of the permit. If the permit holder is not present when authorized activities are being conducted, an assistant identified in the permit shall carry a copy of this permit.

“3. All equipment and samples shall be labelled with the Permit Number of this permit.

“4. Outplantings of American Chestnut shall be limited to the research plot locations at the three sites authorized by this permit. Planting of experimental trees in woodlands or other natural vegetation communities shall not occur at the sites authorized by this permit.

“5. Prior to February 14, 2011, the following information on American Chestnut shall be submitted to Species at Risk Biologist of the MNR...:

i) Mapping of the three planting sites...

ii) UTM coordinates of locations of each planted American Chestnut;

iii) A brief summary of the general health and status of the research plots, planting sites and trees;

iv) A brief summary of tree inoculation procedures, dates, and results.”

The certificate can be revoked at any time and must be renewed at intervals.



# Annual General Meeting Plans are Well Advanced

by Kelly Schafer, Outreach Co-ordinator

Please join us for our Annual General Meeting!!!

This year's AGM will be held on Saturday, October 23rd at Tim Horton Onondaga Farms. All CCC members, friends, family members and anyone else interested in chestnut recovery are invited to attend. The day will begin at 10:00am and should adjourn by 4:00pm.

Interesting updates on chestnut recovery, fun activities for children, a wagon-tour of the breeding nursery and a complimentary lunch will be included in the day.

For the purposes of planning and meal logistics we ask that you please RSVP as soon as you can (by October 9th if possible) to Mrs Kelly Schafer, Outreach Coordinator, 519-823-1458, or [kellys@canadianchestnutcouncil.org](mailto:kellys@canadianchestnutcouncil.org). Kelly can also be contacted for any additional information.

## Agenda

10:00 am: Welcome  
Coffee/Tea  
Open House (Eco Center – Living Laboratory)  
Membership renewals  
Room A (Living Lab): Canadian Chestnut Council AGM  
Room B (Creative Arts): Children's presentation and activities

10:30 am: Welcome by CCC Chair Ron Casier  
Minutes - Secretary  
Breeding Report - A Dale

11:30 am: Treasurer's Report  
Elections

12:30 pm: Lunch at the Molly Henderson building

1:30 pm: Guest Speaker

2:00 pm: Bucket Draws

3:00pm: Questions and Closing Remarks

3:30pm: Wagon tour of the chestnut breeding plot

4:00pm: Adjournment

## Directions to the AGM

The Tim Horton Onondaga Farms is located off Highway 24 between Cambridge and Brantford. From Highway 24, drive east on the Glen Morris Road East to # 264 Glen Morris Road, about 2 km east of the highway. Parking is available in the Visitors' Lot on the right hand side of the entry driveway.

We look forward to seeing you there!

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## Insurance

For some months the Board of Directors has been seeking insurance to cover directors and volunteers during field and other work. Such insurance is routinely purchased by public corporations and volunteer and non-government organizations.

Treasurer Dr George Collin and his successor, Treasurer Paul Faires, have at last a solution, but it took time and research.

Insurance was secured through the Halliwell Mutual Insurance Company in 2009, but it did not appear to cover volunteers who want to help with blight testing, pollination and other tasks. That has now been sorted out.

Coverage was increased by adding a Director and Officer Liability Policy to the existing Commercial Liability Policy to provide \$1 million liability coverage for Directors and Officers of the CCC at a total cost of \$1350 per year.

At a recent meeting with our Ostic agent, Paul and George were assured that volunteers, too, are protected with \$10,000 health and medical insurance, with the restriction by the underwriter that the incident is truly an accident (ie, not the result of a malicious prank).

It was agreed at the June meeting of the Board that the present coverage, as provided by our broker through the Halliwell Mutual Insurance Company, be continued. It was agreed also that coverage be reviewed annually.

We are therefore much relieved to report that all CCC members are covered by insurance against accidental injuries.



The first F2-generation seedlings are in the ground.





## Breeding and Inoculation Progress Report

by Tom Welacky

Over the last 10 years, we have been making progress towards our goal to produce an American chestnut adapted to Ontario's environment and resistant to chestnut blight.

This is a long process, as chestnuts take many years to mature. As Adam Dale mentioned in his recent article, we have to remember that we are dealing with a plant species and a host-pathogen relationship which are very variable. In addition, inoculations, measurements, assessment of inoculations and tree responses represent only a small 'snapshot' of the host-pathogen system at any one time.

The second part of the breeding program is to inoculate our trees with the blight fungus so that we could select the most resistant, or least susceptible ones.

In April, the science group reviewed inoculation results from 2007-09. In 2007, we inoculated 126 trees, 226 in 2008 and 277 in 2009. We have repeated the inoculations on a number of trees. Several trunk inoculations were included for comparison with branch inoculations.

In 2009, we were able to make the first crosses of the second generation (F2) but, unfortunately, we were only able to use the selected trees at Onondaga Farms (Tim Horton children camp), as spring frosts killed the flowers at

Riverbend Farms.

In 2010, another four to six trees were selected for crossings at Onondaga nursery and once again due to a late frost the flowers at Riverbend were not available. Bagging of selected trees was carried out on June 25 and 28 with pollination carried out on July 8 and 10.

From the 2009 crosses approximately 228 seedlings were planted at Onondaga nursery and 124 at the Riverbend nursery in May, 2010 by volunteers and university staff. The first F2 hybrids were planted close together (60 cm apart) into soil covered with a 1.5 meter plastic mulch ground cover and tree guards. The trees will be trunk inoculated once they are greater than 5 cm in diameter.

Science operations have been very successful thus far because of the many hours supplied by volunteers and University of Guelph science staff from Guelph and Simcoe over the past 10 years. The farm managers and staff at Onondaga and Riverbend have done an excellent job of maintaining the nurseries. Additional future volunteers will be very important to the success of the development of a blight resistant American chestnut in Canada.



# RIVERBEND FARMS RESEARCH PLOT REPORT

by Murray Alward

Our chestnut trees as of August are growing well, with shoots two, three and more feet tall. A hand fertilizing of 16-16-16 in June greened up the trees and pushed out new growth. The grass is mowed weekly between rows.

Warm weather with frequent showers made good growing conditions. Thanks to our drip irrigation system, we could supply water over and above mother nature if needed.

We have 124 new seedlings in our plot resulting from last years select crosses made from the most resistant trees. Could we have a super tree in this kindergarten plot?

I have hand sprayed web worms recently on one tree. However, insects into August have not been a problem. We keep an eye on the trees for insects, as they can move very rapidly in hot weather.

In June, trees in the plot were selected and inoculation done. Later in July, Dr. Dale assisted by research assistant Dragon Galic measured their inoculations to determine how the fungus had increased. It was interesting to see how the chestnut blight can move on some trees quite rapidly and others a slower rate.

At our AGM this fall, we will have an update regarding our resistance research and observations to date.

The chestnut plot here at Riverbend has the good, bad, and ugly. We have trees that tower to 20 feet or so and others dead or struggling.

Come and see this war for resistance first hand in September, when we invite our members and friends to visit on the Canadian Chestnut Councils field day.

Unfortunately in spite of good growing conditions we have no chestnuts. Our hard frost on May 10th killed our nut production. We had some male pollen but no nuts. Hard frost

in May was devastating to the crop and this one night event stopped the crop.

The most resistant tall trees are spectacular to see and remind us of the goal to see this beautiful tree grow again to 100 feet or so and be immune from the devastation of the chestnut blight. We look forward to reviewing our research data at our fall AGM and plans for the future.



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## AMERICAN CHESTNUT SITE RECORD

*Castanea dentata*

The CCC wants to know where the chestnut trees are. You can help by submitting any of the listed information you can provide.

Owner's name, telephone, e-mail:

Street or rural address, township, county, province:

GPS or other location data:

Number of American chestnut trees:

Other environmental data:

**Send to any CCC director. Thanks!**

