

The Canadian Sweet Chestnut

-Newsletter of the Canadian Chestnut Council-

Issue # 82

December 2021



<http://www.canadianchestnutcouncil.ca>

Council Mission - to help restore the American Chestnut to the areas of Canada it once occupied.

Current Priorities

- 1) Breeding resistance
- 2) Breaking Isolation / Establishing Gene pool Nodes
- 3) DNA Analysis
- 4) Survey of existing Chestnuts in the wild

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- Annual General Virtual Meeting Overview – Oct. 23rd, 2021 (Chuck Beach)
- Annual General Meeting – Oct. 23, 2021 – Chair’s Report (Ron Casier)
- Five facts about American Chestnut in Canada (Sophia Stolz, Ph.D. candidate, University of Guelph.)
- Year – end Giving (Doug Fagan)

Annual General Meeting – Oct. 23rd, 2021 (Chuck Beach)

The Annual General Meeting took place virtually for the second year in a row. The meeting was held virtually to:

- a) To meet the regulatory requirements of the Canadian Chestnut Council
- b) To provide for a Covid safe environment for our members
- c) To provide members with an update on the current status of the Canadian Chestnut Council

AGM – Chair’s Report – Oct. 23rd, 2021 (Ron Casier)



The thirty third year of the Canadian Chestnut Council was far from typical due to the continuation of the Covid 19 Pandemic and had to overcome many new challenges. The 3000 plus nuts collected from the selected crosses had to be held in stratification until the first of April before the Simcoe greenhouses became available under the restrictions. This two-month delay in germination negated any possibility of a spring planting. This necessitated the maintenance of our current

research seedling over the entire summer until a late summer planting could be arranged.

A new THCC land usage policy regarding the available Chestnut planting sites was worked out. THCC maintained its strict Covid policies for accessing the research plots.

The council wishes to recognize Dragan’s extra effort this past year and the volunteers that came forward to assist with the completion of all programs. Despite having three positions for summer students none could be filled, and Dragan had to depend on willing volunteers to complete all necessary work. A special thank to all the volunteers that came forward.

Inoculation to test for blight resistance was carried out in late June on 170 F2 trees at Onondaga and Casier Farms. In late August at the first measurement stage, it was learned that the inoculum had failed, negating this year’s test. However, measurement of previous years F2 resistance was recorded successfully.

In pollination, 35 trees were utilized resulting in 80 selected crosses and 600 bags being placed. Dragan is currently working on the sterilization and stratification of this year’s harvested research crosses. This includes our third harvest of the all important F3 nuts. Breaking Isolation and Gene Conservation Node programs were suspended for this year due to pandemic restrictions. The Bruce Trail Association were able to plant a seed colony at Fisher’s Pond near Burlington

In September, 288 native, 1140 F2 and 192 F3 seedlings were planted out at Onondaga Farm

thanks to a dedicated group of volunteers under Dragan Galic's guidance. The completion of the first isolated F3 research plot with 600 trees was a milestone event. A second isolated F3 research plot is planned for next year with this year's F3 harvest to provide the first seedlings.

Several new chestnuts were reported to our Chestnut Coordinator, Nathan Munn who collects all pertinent data and verification of these new trees is on going. Efforts to enlist the assistance of Professional Foresters and Tree Markers in identifying and reporting new trees is on going.

Director, Neil Dunning has launched another social media avenue for the Canadian Chestnut Council on Instagram for the computer suave which joins our Facebook page run by director Tim Casson.

A Stewardship Agreement is nearing completion through the Species at Risk Branch of the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks and should come into force prior to the New Year. This will give the council greater flexibility in protecting and restoring the American Chestnut. We are also developing partnerships with the Butternut Recovery Group and the Forest Gene Conservation Association.

Our leaf project under director, Heather Dover was launched inviting interested parties to submit leaf samples for DNA analysis to Dr. Brian Husband's lab at the University of Guelph. This provides important information on the genetic make up of known trees and aids future research.

Director Chuck Beach has assembled informative articles for our regular newsletter this past year and Membership Secretary Terry has reported on the extra generosity of the membership through the Leaf Program. Your donations this year have made a difference with our regular fund raiser avenues shut down.

Another look into Hypovirulence and the possibility of having the American Chestnut

receiving Federal protection are in their early stages.

On a sad note, Dorothy Collins, the wife of the late George Collins a long serving CCC director, passed this summer. A regular AGM attender and chestnut enthusiast and supporter, Dorothy's presence and dedication will be missed.

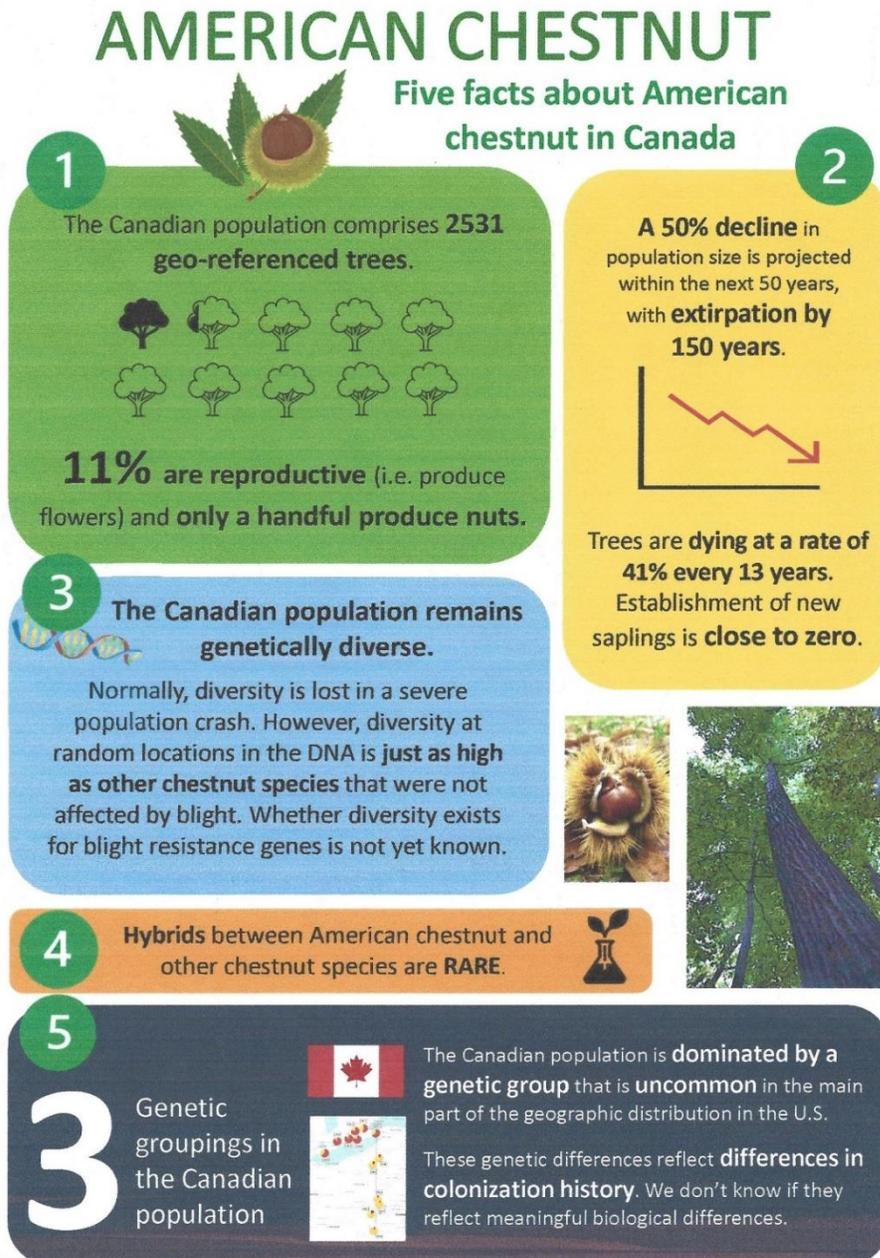
Interest in the American Chestnut has been increasing with inquires from British Columbia, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and across Ontario. As this is our second virtual AGM, the council has adapted the necessary technology to overcome the pandemic restrictions and move forward. To the membership, your renewals, additional donations, and your volunteer efforts with Dr. Dragan Galic have made this another successful year for the council. With a renewed vigour, the Canadian Chestnut Council with the help of its membership looks forward for a bright future for our American Chestnut being restored to it ecological, cultural and economic roles.

Respectfully submitted by Ron Casier, Chair



Five Facts about the American chestnut in Canada (Sophia Stolz)

Following our annual general meeting, Sophia Stolz, (Ph.D. candidate, University of Guelph.), provided attendees with a presentation entitled “**High genetic diversity in American chestnut (*Castanea dentata*) despite a century of decline**”. The presentation summarized her findings regarding the DNA analysis of the American Chestnut in Southern Ontario. Below, she has provided a one-page summary / infographic of her presentation.



Year-end Giving (Doug Fagan)

November 30 was giving Tuesday. It brought to mind the year end is approaching and charitable donations have to be made by December 31 in order for them to be used against this year's income taxes.

The Council has not received any grants to do our preservation and restoration work for the coming year. Most importantly, the breeding program remains underfunded for next season. When considering what donations you may make this year end – please consider the CCC Leaf Program. We have added some categories to appeal to corporate sponsors.

Memberships are important as they fund the operating costs of the Council. If you have not paid your membership for 2021/2022, please do so. Memberships will be receipted, however only donation and membership contributions in excess of \$25 will be acknowledged in the “The Canadian Sweet Chestnut”.

Many Thanks!

Canadian Chestnut Council Donor Leaf Program

White Leaf – Fan – up to \$99

Green Leaf – Champion - \$100 to \$249

Bronze Leaf – Supporter - \$250 to \$499

Silver Leaf – Sponsor - \$500 to \$999

Gold Leaf – Sustainer - \$1,000 to \$4,999

Platinum Leaf – Benefactor - \$5,000 to \$9,999

Diamond Leaf – Patron - \$10,000 and above

Membership Dues (Terry Anderson) – a reminder that membership **dues for 2021/ 2022 as of the 2021 Annual Meeting**. It is the Foundation's policy to remove members from the mailing list after three years in arrears. Dues can be forwarded to our Membership Secretary, Terry Anderson. The fee is \$25.00 and your cheque should be mailed to Terry Anderson.

Make cheques payable to: the Canadian Chestnut Council.

Please send to:

Terry Anderson

261 Sandy Brook Way,

Kingsville, ON. N9Y 0A4

Want more information:

Website - www.canadianchestnutcouncil.ca

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Council Directors – Chuck Beach, Ron Casier, Tim Casson, Gordon Chinnick, Heather Dover, Neil Dunning, Doug Fagan, John Hill, Ken MacGillivray, Nathan Munn, Stephen Penney, Christine Vey.
Interim Director – Sara Richer