



FAQ for Volunteers

How do I get American chestnut seeds or seedlings?

- ◆ **Membership** – Regular membership in our Chapter entitles you to receive native seed nuts (not blight resistant!). Potentially blight resistant nuts are available to **Long-time** (10 years) and **Sponsor Level** members.
- ◆ **Ceremonial Planting Requests** – limited plantings on public sites for educational purposes – contact office (814) 863-7192.
- ◆ **Simply looking for nut production?** Google local nurseries, but we recommend planting native Americans! We do not endorse or promote any nurseries at this time.

When will disease-resistant American chestnuts be available to the public?

TACF is testing its most advanced, potentially blight-resistant lines for disease resistance; they are not yet available to the public. No promises but combining the “best of the best” of our breeding materials and recent advances in biotechnology, may allow for public distribution within the next decade. As always, members and sponsors will have first access.

Why plant pure American chestnuts if they will get the blight?

- ◆ To **preserve native germplasm**, preserving genetic diversity for future breeding.
- ◆ To learn about **site viability and best practices** for future restoration plantings.
- ◆ **Short term benefits** yummy nuts for people and wildlife; and wood to make stuff.
- ◆ Add **biodiversity** to forests where other species are dying (e.g. ash/hemlock).

What’s the difference between the Dunstan and the TACF Backcross?

Dunstan is a commercial hybrid of mostly Chinese origin. It mostly looks like a Chinese chestnut and generally has high blight-resistance. There is little resemblance to an American chestnut in the Dunstan hybrid.



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I think I found an American chestnut, what should I do?

Complete a [Tree Locator Form](#) available at our table, for download on our website, or by contacting our office. Follow all directions for collection and shipping of the sample and form.

What is chestnut blight?

The chestnut blight is caused by a fungus, *Cryphonectria parasitica*. Imported on plant material in the late 1800s, it was first isolated and named in 1904 in New York City. Our native chestnuts have no resistance to this Asiatic fungus and the disease spread quickly, leaving only dead stumps and sprouts. By 1950, except for shrubby root sprouts, the keystone species had all but disappeared from its eastern range (180 million acres). Some mature trees still survive in isolation, but they usually have little to no resistance to this disease.

Why should I care about this one tree?

- ◆ **Carbon Sequestration:** Fast growing, it can help mitigate global warming through the uptake and storage of carbon.
- ◆ **Food Sources for People and Wildlife**
- ◆ **Timber Products:** Straight-grained, lighter in weight than oak, chestnut is as rot resistant as redwood. It was used for telegraph poles, railroad ties, shingles, paneling, fine furniture, musical instruments, even pulp and plywood.

Is the American chestnut extinct?

There are an estimated 435 million American chestnut trees still in the range, too many to be called “extinct” or “endangered”. The species is “functionally extinct, however, since those trees no longer function as a species is supposed to - providing ecosystem services (food, shelter, etc) and reproducing to make more individuals. The chestnut blight prevents these from maturing into full-size trees to fulfill their role in the ecosystem.

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