



The Kentucky Railsplitter

Newsletter of the Kentucky Chapter
of the American Chestnut Foundation

Working to Restore the American Chestnut
Volume 6, Number 1 Winter 2007

Kentucky's 2006 Pollination Results

Last summer's pollination efforts yielded a bountiful harvest for our chapter. The pollinations were part of a huge undertaking that was greatly aided by TACF members, landowners, volunteers, and the employees of Kentucky Division of Forestry (KDF), and the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR).

As was done last year, the state was divided into two regions. KY Chapter intern Mike French coordinated pollination of the state's central and western trees. KDF and KDFWR employees assisted with pollination in the east. Additionally, Anne Myers began producing Chinese-American hybrids (F1s) that will be used for orchard controls. Anne applied stored American pollens to some nice Chinese trees that she found in Boston, KY.

In the central and western part of the state, we hired Ricky and Mac Brandon, and with their bucket truck we were able to pollinate five trees. With a large amount of help from the Kentucky Division of Forestry, we applied various American pollens to Charles England's state champion tree in Adair County. Joe Shibig, Hill Craddock, and Shannon Cagle came up from Tennessee and applied numerous Chinese and American pollens to the tree as well.

The Kentucky Division of Forestry team, led by Kenny Pyles and composed of Belinda Smith, Greg Parnell, Ricky Markum and others, applied 7/8 pollens to KYCLI1 and KYWAY1, the first Clinton and Wayne County trees respectively. The Butler County tree on Sam Givens' property was pollinated this year as well, although this would have gone better if we hadn't stuck the bucket truck in 3 feet of mud. We labored for more than 3 hours, and finally pulled it out with a tractor. A fair crowd had gathered, and a talk pertaining to American chestnut restoration and forest ecology was given to the Givens family and others by Michael. The Christian County tree on the Askew farm produced a good number of flowers and was easily pollinated.

Trees in eastern Kentucky proved somewhat disappointing, except for the Letcher County trees. A large tree in Menifee

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Annual Chapter Meeting Will Be Joint Effort

The Annual meeting of the Kentucky Chapter of The American Chestnut Foundation will be, for the first time, a joint meeting with the Kentucky Nut Growers Association (KNGA). The meeting will be held Saturday, April 28 at the Hardin County Agricultural Extension Office in Elizabethtown, Kentucky, 201 Peterson Drive.

The TACF and KNGA have many mutual interests, including the furthering of the American chestnut tree in Kentucky. KNGA members have lots of experience establishing and maintaining nut orchards and their knowledge will benefit our Kentucky chapter greatly.

The KNGA meeting will begin at 9:30 am (Eastern Time) and end with their popular annual spring plant auction sale beginning at 12:30. The meeting will include free scionwood of various nut cultivars, persimmons, and pawpaws. At 11:30 there will be a break for a potluck lunch. The extension office has a well equipped kitchen for dishes that need to be heated. The TACF meeting will begin at 12:30 (Eastern Time) with the Kentucky Chapter's board meeting and conclude with four educational presentations from 2:00-4:00 pm.

For a complete schedule and directions please see page 4 and 5 for further information. For more information on the KNGA meeting contact Kirk Pomper at kirk.pomper@kysu.edu or 502-597-5942.

For further information on the Kentucky Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation meeting contact Scott Freidhof at scottf@mikrotec.com or 606-784-5697.



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Newsletter

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Summer Pollination continued

County did not produce female flowers this summer as expected. A few male flowers were present at the top of this 70-foot tree. The landowner cut down all the trees around it in June to provide more sunlight. Hopefully, the tree will have energy to produce flowers in 2007. A second smaller tree in Menifee County produced burs last year. We were surprised to find no female flowers on it this year. This tree needs to be released to the sun as well.

A large tree in Greenup County was barely alive at the beginning of the summer. One branch in the crown leafed out and flowered profusely. Just as the male flowers were about to open, the branch succumbed to the blight. No pollination was attempted as a result. On the positive side, we are nursing some other trees along for future pollination. We hope to work with trees in Madison, Carter, Rowan, and Lewis counties in future years.

After lengthy discussions with TACF's top scientists, Michael French took on the additional task of conducting controlled pollinations at Meadowview, Virginia, at TACF's research farms. Permission was obtained from Fred Hebard, as he was assured that this would require very little extra work on his crew's part, as they are quite busy during pollination and harvest. Rather than receiving 7/8 pollen from Fred Hebard et al. and pollinating American chestnuts here in the state, Michael instead took pollen from our American chestnuts and applied it to the 7/8 trees at Meadowview. In this way, we will be able to produce our 15/16 lines from Kentucky's trees that are inaccessible to bucket trucks and that are unable to be pollinated by erecting scaffolding or by sending up arborists. The work was done mostly by use of an orchard ladder, and went rather smoothly, although a bit of excitement occurred when one of Fred's bucket trucks began to roll downhill with Michael in the bucket with the boom fully extended. One of Fred's employees managed to stop the truck and Michael only suffered a few heart attacks, so all was well. In the future however, tire chocks should be used on all trucks not equipped with out-riggers.

The following list summarizes our backcross 3 pollinations for 2006, both in Kentucky and Virginia.

SUMMER 2006 POLLINATION RESULTS (BACKCROSS 3 ONLY)

| KY MOTHER | VA FATHER | # NUTS | GENERATION |
|--------------|-----------|--------|------------|
| Butler Co | JB 572 | 37 | B3 |
| Clinton Co 1 | BE 134 | 124 | B3 |
| Wayne Co 1 | BE 138 | 7 | B3 |

| VA MOTHER | KY FATHER | # NUTS | GENERATION |
|-----------|--------------|--------|------------|
| AB 248 | Christian Co | 38 | B3 |
| AB 247 | Clinton Co 2 | 87 | B3 |
| BE 50 | Wayne Co 3 | 17 | B3 |
| GR 443 | Marshall Co | 40 | B3 |
| JB 197 | Letcher Co 1 | 169 | B3 |
| TM 616 | Letcher Co 2 | 84 | B3 |



President's Corner - Invitation.....



A number of invitations are in order. First I would like to invite all of our members to the chapter's annual meeting on April 28, 2007. This year's meeting will be held jointly with the Kentucky Nut Grower's Association in Elizabethtown at the Hardin County Agricultural Extension Office (201 Peterson Drive). The meeting schedule and travel directions are detailed on page 4. Members of the Nut Grower's Association have a lot of experience with growing tree orchards and their knowledge will definitely benefit us as we expand our chestnut orchards. Four educational chestnut programs will be presented in the afternoon between 2:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. Please see the details on page 4.

Surviving chestnut tree reports continue to trickle in and consequently our chapter intern Mike French becomes busier each spring and summer visiting potential new trees and pollinating flowering trees. The majority of pollination occurs during the last 2 weeks of June. Volunteers will need to be flexible with their schedules since timing is everything. Ideally, the state should be divided into multiple regions where a group of volunteers tackles the responsibilities of visiting potential new "Mother Trees," pollinating trees, and harvesting nuts in their region.

The need for space to plant orchards has become critical too and will only become more pressing in the future. If you have well-drained, acidic soil on your property where a chestnut orchard could be established, please contact me or any of the officers. Each 250-tree orchard requires just 1 acre of space. These orchards will contain 3rd backcross generation trees. These trees will be purposely infected with the blight after about 5 years of growth. The blight resistant trees will be used for the next generation of breeding which is the first intercross. The majority of trees will not be resistant and will be destroyed. The national office of TACF requires landowners to sign a germplasm agreement. This agreement is an acknowledgement by the landowner that the trees and nuts belong to the TACF and may not be used for personal gain.

Additional opportunities exist to help maintain the chapter website and help with the newsletter. Fund-raising skills would be a great asset as well. If any of the above opportunities interest you, please be proactive by contacting any of the chapter officers. Our phone numbers and e-mail addresses are printed in this newsletter. Thank you and I hope to see you at the annual meeting on April 28.

Scott Freidhof
Kentucky Chapter President

TACF Forming a Partnership with NWTF

The American Chestnut Foundation is currently working with the National Wild Turkey Federation to complete a Memorandum of Understanding and formalize a working agreement between these two conservation organizations. The NWTF, a hugely successful, nationwide organization is the largest such group in our country, with close to half a million members.

On May 22, 2006, TACF President Marshall T. Case, Chairman Herb Darling, Regional Science Coordinator Paul Cisco, and Rex Mann, from the Kentucky Chapter, met with the leadership of NWTF at their national headquarters in Edgefield, South Carolina. Out of that meeting, agreement was reached to formalize a partnership between our two groups. NWTF will publicize TACF and our efforts to their membership and the public through their extensive communication network. We also will work together to seek new funding sources for both organizations. TACF would also expect to receive financial help from the Superfunds of various state chapters. In return, NWTF would work closely with TACF in our restoration effort and would serve as a clearing house for distributing blight resistant seedlings.

Plans are in place to sign the Memorandum of Understanding at our national meeting in Arlington, Virginia on October 20th-21st.

This agreement will mark another milestone in our quest to restore the American Chestnut. Hopefully, many NWTF members will wish to join the TACF.



TACF Chairman Herb Darling, KY Chapter Past President Rex Mann and TACF President Marshall Case at the National Wild Turkey Federation National Headquarters in Edgefield, South Carolina.

JOINT SPRING KNGA-TACF -KY CHAPTER PROGRAM

9:30-1:30 Eastern Time

KNGA Nut Display: Examine first-hand the fine nuts that are grown in Kentucky and adjoining states.

KNGA Swap Shop and Scionwood Exchange: An opportunity to distribute hard to obtain nut tree and other plant material. Plastic bags, moisture proof wrappings, rubber bands, and tags are needed to take plants home.

10:45 am

KNGA Board of Directors Meeting.

11:15 am

Joint KNGA and TACF membership meeting and KNGA nomination of officers and directors.

11:30 am

Potluck Luncheon-a kitchen is available to warm or re-heat dishes.

12:30 pm

KNGA Spring Auction Sale-seeds, plants, nuts, grafted fruit and nut trees, berry plants, grape vines, and flower specimens.

12:30 pm **TACF Board Meeting/Membership Meeting**

2:00 pm **TACF Educational Programs**

1. Ecology and Distribution of American chestnuts at Mammoth Cave National Park, 2. Effects of light on restoration of American chestnuts (at Mammoth Cave). 3. Growing American chestnuts. 4. Breeding program update.

4:00 pm **Adjourn**

Directions

The Hardin County Agricultural Extension Office is located just off US 62, about 2 miles West from downtown Elizabetown - directly behind the Cecilia Auto Sales lot. KNGA signs will be posted.

From the West; on US 62, turn left at Peterson Drive, first street past the Manatee Funeral Home.

From the East and North; drive west on US 62 through Elizabethtown. Turn right on Peterson Drive - first street past the auto sales lot.



Kentucky
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KY Chapter The American Chestnut Foundation
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