

# The Canadian Sweet Chestnut

-Newsletter of the Canadian Chestnut Council-

Issue # 68 – September 2017



<http://www.canadianchestnutcouncil.ca>

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**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 Nods
- 3) DNA Analysis
- 4) Survey of existing Chestnuts in the wild

## **In this issue:**

- The latest survey analysis of surviving American Chestnuts in Southwestern Ontario (Part 1)
- American Chestnuts in the wild – you can help
- The Annual General Meeting – Saturday, Oct. 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017

## **Survey of Chestnuts in the wild - latest survey analysis of trees in Southwestern Ontario**

In the early 1900's, a Chestnut blight that arrived from Asia, began to wipe out the American Chestnut trees in North America. The American Chestnut tree was an important part of the tree canopy in Southwestern Ontario (the most northern limit of its native range.) Although up to 2,000,000 trees may have once occupied the area, researchers in the labs of Drs. Greg Boland and Brian Husband, from the University of Guelph, (S. Van Drunen et. al.) compared the results of a 2014-2015 survey of trees to an inaugural survey conducted in 2001-2002 by Tindall et al and reported on in 2004.

In the analysis of this comparison, published this summer in the Journal *Forest Ecology and Management*, the U of G team reported finding more individual specimens of American chestnut in the province than expected. Some 600 trees from the first survey as well as 100 new ones were located. Looking at tree size, reproduction and health status of the trees, the analysis concludes that the population of surviving American Chestnuts in the wild continues to decline as trees become

isolated and unable to reproduce. The paper also identifies the need to increased production of new seedlings in natural populations to stem this continuing decline.

- An e-copy of this paper is included with this newsletter.

Below find two media summaries of the findings:

University of Guelph News - <https://news.uoguelph.ca/2017/08/ontarios-chestnut-trees-frozen-time-u-g-study-finds/>

CBC News - <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/kitchener-waterloo/american-chestnuts-ontario-blight-fungal-disease-guelph-1.4259142>

(\*\* In the next addition of the newsletter, we will look at the distribution of wild chestnuts in Southwestern Ontario.)



Chestnut Council members, Tim Casson (left), John Hill beside two trees in Brant County

### **American Chestnuts in the Wild – you can help**

The University of Guelph, department of Environmental Sciences maintains the data base of American Chestnuts in the wild. **You can help.**

Do you know the location of an American Chestnut tree in the wild.

If so, please complete the attached form email or mail to the Canadian Chestnut Council c/o Doug Fagan. All found Chestnuts will be added the University of Guelph data base.

Email – [dfagan@sympatico.ca](mailto:dfagan@sympatico.ca)

Mailing address - 89 Kertland Street, Elora Ontario N0B 1S0

**Annual General Meeting 2017 – Saturday, Oct. 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017**

Updates on all Canadian Chestnut Council priorities will be provided.

Special Guest Speaker - William MacDonald, Professor of plant pathology at West Virginia University will speak on the biological control of chestnut blight using viruses that debilitate the blight causing fungus

Location – Tim Horton Children’s Foundation – Onondaga Farms  
Science/ Eco-centre, 264 Glen Morris Road East, St. George Ontario

Time – Registration 11:00am. Meeting 12:00pm

Snack available.

**????-**; " why didn't the tree want to play checkers? Because it was a ches...tnut"

**Want more information:**

**Website** - [www.canadianchestnutcouncil.ca](http://www.canadianchestnutcouncil.ca)

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