

The Canadian Sweet Chestnut



Canadian Chestnut Council
Conseil Canadien du Châtaignie
Restoring the American Chestnut



Issue #96 - Fall 2026

Newsletter of the Canadian Chestnut Council

[Council Mission – to promote the preservation and restoration of the American chestnut \(*Castanea dentata*\) in Canada.](#)

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Canadian Chestnut Council / Conseil Canadien de la Châtaignie Notice of Annual General Meeting of Members

NOTICE is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of members of the Canadian Chestnut Council will commence at **1:00 P.M.** on **Sunday, Oct. 25th, 2026.**

The meeting will be held for the purpose of conducting the affairs of the Council including:

- Receiving & considering the Council's financial reports for the year ending, Sept. 30, 2026.
- Confirming and approving all acts and proceedings of Directors and officers in 2025/2026.
- Election of New or Returning Directors of the Council for the 2026/2027 operating year.
- Confirmation of the Executive of the Council
- Business Arising

The business portion of the meeting will be followed by several presentations, including:

- Madison Sturba - Invasive Species Centre (presenting virtually)
- Dr. Dragan Galic - Progress Report
- Dr. Greg Boland - Hypovirulence
- Preliminary Analysis from the Chestnut Survey 2024-2026
- Field tour of the research plot, led by Dr Dragan Galic



Dragan Galic and CCC Sign (Photo: Neil Dunning)



Onondaga Farms Eco-Centre (Photo: Neil Dunning)

For In-person Attendance: The actual meeting will begin at 1:00pm; attendees are welcome at 12:30pm. There will be raffle prizes for those attending in person.

***Tim Horton Children's Foundation – Onondaga Farms
Science/ Eco-Centre, 264 Glen Morris Road East,
St. George, Ontario***

For Virtual Attendance: The actual meeting will begin at 1:00 P.M.; but the link will open at 12:30 P.M. for participants to have social time.

ZOOM Meeting Details:

Topic: CCC AGM 2026 Oct 25, 1:00 P.M. ET (open at 12:30 P.M. for social time)

Time: Oct 25, 2026 12:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84291608371?pwd=goYd2VxsVwoM142t0RPCIDxqx5BFAA.1>

Meeting ID: 842 9160 8371

Passcode: ccc

AGM Speaker Madison Sturba



Madison Sturba

Madison is the Terrestrial Invasives Team Lead at the Invasive Species Centre where she oversees a variety of projects related to invasive pests, disease, and plants. She graduated from the University of Windsor with an MSc in Biology and an Honours BSc in Behaviour, Cognition, and Neuroscience.

John Hill Award Fund Appeal By Ron Casier

Friends and Colleagues;

The Canadian Chestnut Council lost one of its foremost supporters and contributors in 2024. To memorialize John Hill's contribution to the Canadian Chestnut Council and to his local community as well, I hope you will consider a donation to establish an Award Fund in John's honour. Please click below to learn more details about the John Hill Award Fund.

The Memorial Fund is administered by the Brant Community Foundation¹ who hold the \$10,000 endowment and provide the annual award money. We are asking our membership to donate to the Memorial Fund to achieve the endowment amount pledged.



John Hill (Photo: Ron Casier)



John at his farm (Photo: Ron Casier)

Here is how to donate:

Donate on line at: www.brantcommunityfoundation.com. Click on the "Donate Now" button at the top of the page. A drop-down menu under the Fund section lets you choose the "John Hill Award Fund." A charitable receipt will be issued for all donations. For further information please contact Brant Community Foundation¹ at: 1 (519) 756-2499. 📞

1 - Brant Community Foundation at Glen Morris Public School located at 522 Glen Morris Rd E., Glen Morris, ON N0B 1W0 (County of Brant)



Who Has Seen the Wind?¹ By Christina Rossetti

Who has seen the wind?
Neither I nor you:
But when the leaves hang trembling,
The wind is passing through.

Who has seen the wind?
Neither you nor I:
But when the trees bow down their heads,
The wind is passing by.

1 - Rossetti, Christina. 1907. *Who Has Seen the Wind?* in **Poems for Children**, P.48. Educational Publishing, Company, NYC, NY, USA. <https://archive.org/details/poemsforchildren00ross> . Accessed 20251212Fri. 📄



"This grand show is eternal. It is always sunrise somewhere; the dew is never all dried at once; a shower is forever falling; vapor ever rising. Eternal sunrise, eternal sunset; eternal dawn and gloaming, on seas and continents and islands, each in its turn, as the round earth rolls." -- **John Muir**

Dolf Wynia By Neil Dunning

Originally from Holland, Dolf Wynia is a retired forester known to many of our members and known across Ontario for his work with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. One of his many endeavours was the Superintendency of the St. Williams Tree Nursery in Norfolk County, a nursery which supplied millions of trees over its history to reforest many parts of southern Ontario.

When Dolf and his wife Anne moved to Norfolk from Thunder Bay so Dolf could assume the Superintendency, they were able to purchase a home with a small acreage in the south-west part of the County. Later, on the retirement of a neighbouring tobacco farmer, they were able to purchase another 22 acres to add to their parcel. Upon his retirement in 1990 Dolf became involved in a plethora of new activities. Over the years these included the Norfolk Field Naturalists, the St. Williams Forestry Station Museum, mushroom compost research, the Rotary Club, the Norfolk Woodlot Owners Association and more.



**Dolf and Anne Wynia chat with Dr. Dragan Gallic at the Norfolk Woodlot Association AGM in March 2026
(Photo: Neil Dunning)**

Having a property on Norfolk sand, and given Dolf's lifelong interest in trees and forestry, starting a commercial chestnut orchard was a natural fit for one of his many retirement projects and public service efforts. Dolf had already had some experience with American chestnut while Superintendent of the St. Williams Forestry Station—he had been asked to plant several American chestnuts on the substantial St. Williams lands in the early days of chestnut restoration research (he was also to become an early member of the Canadian Chestnut Council).



**Dolf Wynia with one of his remaining Oriental chestnuts
(Photo: Neil Dunning)**

For commercial production Dolf chose the oriental chestnut as a candidate for establishing an orchard. Many of their trees were sourced from Grimo Nut Nursery. Several years, several acres, and several harvests later the Wynia's had established a successful venture. Their nuts were sold from Norfolk to Ottawa by a distributor and always paid a good dividend, covering costs, a reasonable profit, and a lot of interesting challenges, such as how to collect the nuts.

After 25 years the business has had to end—not due to a blight but to *Curculio sayi*, or small (lesser) chestnut weevil. This insect lays its eggs on developing nuts and the resulting grubs eat the nut, which negates the point of growing Oriental chestnuts in Canada. There are sprays available to treat for the weevil, but because after 20 years the Wynia trees had reached a size requiring more powerful (and expensive) spraying equipment, the orchard was no longer financially viable. Up to 40 % of the crop

was being lost each year. Over the last five years the operation has wound down and many of the trees have been removed.

Dolf's learning from the challenge of the weevil is to spread out an orchard operation over separate locations, much like the CCC is doing with our out plantings. Thank you to Dolf for sharing his reminiscences of his time as a chestnut orchardist. 🍁



Invasive Shrub Riddles **By John Foster**

- 1) I have square green stems. My fruit is an aril in 4-lobed capsules. I have crimson fall foliage.
Who am I? _____
- 2) I can have green or purple foliage. My fruit is a small red berry. I have lots of small thorns.
Who am I? _____
- 3) I have a 5-petalled white flower. My fruit is a hip. I have curved spines on my stem.
Who am I? _____
- 4) I have small leaves with many teeth. My fruit is a samara. I grow as a small tree by streams.
Who am I? _____
- 5) I have single or 3-lobed leaves. My fruit is a syncarp. I grow wild or cultivated in many forms.
Who am I? _____
- 6) I have small leaves with a tip notch. My fruit is a globular berry. I have orange berries in the fall.
Who am I? _____ 🍁

(See answers at the bottom of Page 11)



Indian Summer¹ **By Wilfred Campbell**

Along the line of smoky hills
The crimson forest stands,
And all the day the blue-jay calls
Throughout the autumn lands.

Now by the brook the maple leans
With all his glory spread,
And all the sumacs on the hills
Have turned their green to red.

Now by great marshes wrapt in mist,
Or past some river's mouth,
Throughout the long, still autumn day
Wild birds are flying south.

¹ - Campbell, Wilfred. 1889. *Indian Summer* in **Lake lyrics and other poems**. J. and A. McMillan Saint John, N.B.
<https://rpo.library.utoronto.ca/content/indian-summer> (Accessed Wed., Oct. 18, 2023). 🍁

Isn't weather strange? Dew helps mustards bloom while lightning lights up leaf tips.

By Clement Kent^{1,2}

A new study looked at what helps trigger flowering in some plants in the cabbage-kale family - the Brassicas. A number of these are early blooming annuals that flower in late spring or early summer, including the mouse-eared cress *Arabidopsis thaliana*. This cress is a favorite of botanists because a generation can be as short as six weeks, enabling quick experiments.

Some of the study authors were in the Netherlands, where this cress grows as a field weed. They noticed many of the plants in some places flowering together. They looked at the weather, but none of air temperature, sunshine, nor rain seemed to explain the synchronous blooming. Then they found that often the big blooms occurred about a week after nights when there were heavy dews. So off to the greenhouse they went.

Sure enough, manipulating both temperature and humidity in the greenhouse so there would be dew at dawn boosted flower bud formation. They traced the effect to tiny hairs on plant leaves and stems where dew droplets tended to form. A chemical reaction in these droplets helped produce nitric oxide which was absorbed by the plant and went on to damp down expression of genes that inhibit bud formation. Most of the study goes into how this all works.

But then they wondered: cress is in the Brassicas - could other species in the family have the same response? In the kind of tour-de-force that computers have made possible, they looked at a database of twelve million records of flowering in cabbage, kales, mustards, broccoli, etc. and compared them to weather records. Sure enough, they found that many species have a similar dewy-eyed response in triggering flowers.

So, the next time you see the early morning sun glittering on millions of dew droplets, think of how some plants may be sensing this and revving up their flowering engines.

So much for dawn. Let's look at weather that usually comes in afternoon or early evening - thunderstorms. We know that before lightning strikes, there can be large electric fields on the ground. We also know that electric fields get concentrated near sharp tips, from static sparking from our fingertips as we walk over dry winter wool rugs, or from the needle points in a showy Tesla spark generator.

So, some botanists wondered what the huge electric fields before a thunderstorm did to plants with pointy leaves. They had to invent instruments that could photograph tiny electrical discharges from leaf tips, then put them in a van that could be driven to a forest on days when thunderstorms were predicted, and try to catch the little sparks with their super cameras when the sky was dark.

Sure enough, trees with sharp-tipped leaves did have tiny coronal sparks even though they weren't hit by lightning. In fact, enough electricity passed through tips of some pine needles or sharply pointed sycamore leaves that the tissue at the tips was killed. This could be seen as teeny brown tips on leaves after a storm.

The authors note that climate change is predicted to bring us more dry lightning, and ask whether leaf tip browning will become an issue for some species of trees in the future. 🌩️

References:

- 1 - Richter, Hanna. 2026. *In a first, researchers film treetops glowing during thunderstorms* in **Science**, American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), Washington, D.C., USA. [Doi: 0.1126/science.zgdl9r1](https://doi.org/10.1126/science.zgdl9r1) and <https://www.science.org/content/article/first-researchers-film-treetops-glowing-during-thunderstorms>. Accessed 20260409.
- 2 - Zheng, Yu et al. 2026. Foliar dew droplet-induced redox cascades promote early flowering in Brassicaceae plants. PNAS 123 (8): 1-7. National Academy of Sciences, Washington, D.C., USA. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2527021123> and <https://www.pnas.org/doi/epdf/10.1073/pnas.2527021123>. Accessed 20260409. 



Recognizing the Rights of Nature - A Necessary Shift in Law and Culture **By Vince Fiori to**

(Original article used with the permission of the author)

For generations, we've treated the planet as if it were an endless resource. Forests would regrow, rivers would heal, harvested oceans would refill with life, and somehow the air would remain clean no matter how much we poisoned it. We believed that dilution was the solution to pollution. But it wasn't true. Today's reality reads like a long list of overdue bills: rising greenhouse gases, contaminated soils, plastic-filled oceans, depleted aquifers, collapsing wildlife populations... More of us understand now that the Earth's life-support systems have limits, and we are pushing past them.

This is where the Rights of Nature movement steps in and asks a simple, reasonable question: If inanimate corporations can have legal rights, why can't living ecosystems?

Corporations are human inventions. Rivers, forests, mountains, wetlands, and species are not. They breathe, they flow, they grow, and make all life on this planet possible, including ours.

Rights of Nature is an ancient idea. Long before modern courts, many human societies viewed themselves as part of the natural world. Many Indigenous peoples around the world continue to see rivers, forests, and mountains as relatives. With relatives come responsibilities. You can't take from a family member forever and act surprised when the relationship breaks down.

Western economic and legal systems have turned the natural world into nothing more than exploitable resources, where everything has a price and nothing has a voice. This lopsided approach is now pushing hard against natural limits. Ecosystems are failing, and our future fails with them.

Rights of Nature is a perception that ecosystems are persons under the law. They can be represented in court, defended from harm, and restored when damaged. Guardians or legal representatives, often chosen by local communities or governments, speak on their behalf. Through the actions of people, Nature becomes a legal participant in a court of law rather than a silent casualty.

A growing number of countries and communities around the world have already adopted Rights of Nature policies and laws, including:

- Ecuador wrote Rights of Nature into its constitution in 2008.
- New Zealand, guided by Māori leadership, recognize the Whanganui River, Te Urewera forest, and Taranaki Maunga as legal persons.

- Colombia, Panama, Uganda, Spain, and others have granted rights to rivers, forests, lagoons and other ecosystems.
- In Canada, the untamed Magpie River in Quebec has legal guardians defending its right to flow clean and unrestricted.

These laws don't freeze human activity. They value the life-giving environmental services that sustain us, while preventing reckless damage that destabilizes ecosystems and harms our communities. The Rights of Nature approach to laws and policies shifts our culture from one of unlimited extraction and exploitation to one of responsibility, stewardship and reciprocity.

Some critics may claim recognizing nature's rights will hurt economically. But a prosperous economy on a resource-depleted dying planet is a short-term illusion. If the water is unsafe and crops fail while storms and fires grow increasingly severe, wealth becomes meaningless. A healthy planet is the foundation of every job, industry, and form of prosperity.

Rights of Nature laws can be messy, inconsistent, or easily challenged — just like civil rights, labour rights, and women's rights once were. No important societal change happens without resistance. All movements must evolve over time in response to new understandings and ideas.

We're at this kind of moment now. Ecological decline isn't a distant threat; it's happening right now in real time. We can see and measure it. Future generations will ask what we did when the warnings became clear.

Did we assume someone else would fix our problems? Did we really believe a living river could have fewer rights than a corporation? Or will we be able to say that we finally recognized nature not as property to be exploited, but as a partner to love and respect — and that we updated our laws to reflect that current reality?

Which side are you on? 🌱🔪



🍂 Eco-Friendly Halloween Decoration Tips

Halloween fun doesn't have to spook the environment. A few simple choices can keep wildlife safe and reduce waste across Ontario.

Go natural: Pumpkins, branches, leaves, and straw make beautiful décor and can be composted afterward.

Skip fake spider webs: They can trap birds and small mammals. and pose a serious hazard to wildlife especially during fall migration.

Use gentle lighting: Warm, low-intensity LEDs protect nocturnal species. Reduce bright outdoor lighting to support dark-sky habitats.

Avoid single-use plastics: Choose reusable or thrifted decorations instead of inflatables and plastic props.

A greener Halloween keeps the magic alive, for us and for the creatures who share our neighbourhoods. 🌱🔪

Photo Gallery - May 2026 Seed Planting Update
All Photos By Grieg Garland



American Chestnut Greenhouse Planting View 1



American Chestnut Greenhouse Planting View 2

Photo Gallery - June 2026 American Chestnut Inoculations
All Photos By Dave Darrach



Participants in the Blight Inoculations 1



Participants in the Blight Inoculations 2



Making the Blight Inoculation Site



Blight Inoculation Site



Blight Inoculant in Petri Dish and doing inoculation

"In each new generation of trees when trees get to a certain size, some will be selected to be inoculated as shown in these photos. These trees will be monitored and we watch & measure the size and growth rate of the blight wound at the infection site. These measurements will form some of the criteria for selecting parents for the next breeding cycle."



Taping the Blight Inoculation Site



Taping around the tree trunk

Photo Gallery - Autumn American Chestnut Leaves
All Photos by John Foster



American Chestnut Autumn Leaves 1



American Chestnut Autumn Leaves 2



American Chestnut Autumn Leaves 3



American Chestnut Autumn Leaves 4



CCC Board of Directors Openings

Are you passionate about the American Chestnut? The Canadian Chestnut Council (CCC) is looking for dedicated individuals to join our board of directors. The American Chestnut (*Castanea dentata*) is one of the most endangered tree species in Canada. For over 20 years, CCC has worked diligently to breed Chestnut Blight resistant trees through our successful scientific-based efforts. We hope to facilitate the eventual restoration of the American Chestnut to forests in southern Ontario. Through our restoration efforts we raise public awareness about the rarity of the American Chestnut and its importance to Canadian natural heritage. If you would like to share in our mission and shape the strategic direction of CCC, please contact us at: info@canadianchestnutcouncil.ca . 



(Invasive Shrub Riddles - Answers: 1) Burning Bush; 2) Japanese Barberry;
3) Multiflora Rose 4) Siberian Elm; 5) White Mulberry; 6) Firethorn)

About the Canadian Chestnut Council

Current Priorities

- Breeding resistance
- Breaking Isolation / Establishing Gene Pool Nodes
- DNA Analysis
- Survey of existing Chestnuts in the wild

Updated Canadian Chestnut Council Website

The Canadian Chestnut Council is testing a new website. Please have a look at: www.canadianchestnutcouncil.ca We invite you to have a look and explore.

Annual Meeting of the Canadian Chestnut Council

The annual meeting of the Canadian Chestnut Council is coming up. The meeting will take place both in person and virtually. Please mark your calendars (**Details on Pages 1 and 2**).

Date: Sunday, Oct. 25, 2026

Time: 1:00 P.M. **In person reception begins at 12:30 P.M.**

Location: Tim Hortons Foundation Camp – Onondaga Farms Eco- Centre
264 Glen Morris Rd E, Brant, ON N0E 1N0

Annual Membership Fees

Membership fees for the Canadian Chestnut Council are due as of the Annual Meeting in October. Only members in good standing have the ability to vote at the annual meeting, be apprised of events and receive the quarterly newsletter.

2026/2027 Membership Fees – effective October 2023 - \$35.00

By Mail: make cheque payable to “Canadian Chestnut Council” and send to Secretary, Canadian Chestnut Council c/o Jeff Leader, 18 Forbes St., Glen Morris, Ontario, N0B 1W0 or bring it to the next meeting or special event.

By Internet: Please send your e-transfer to ccc.membership17@gmail.com.

For More information Contact:

Email - info@canadianchestnutcouncil.ca

Web - www.canadianchestnutcouncil.ca

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