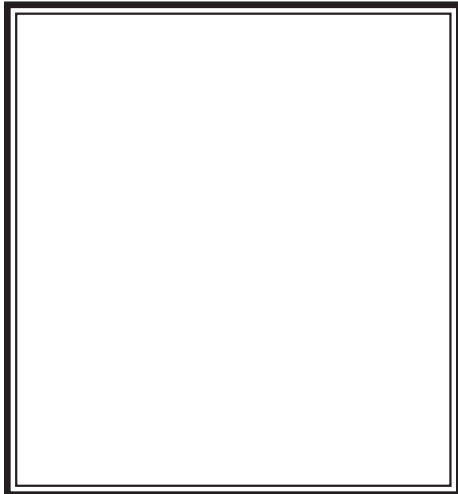


WCGA Acquires Its Own Domain Name and Website

In an effort to better serve its members and create a more professional image your WCGA Board of Directors voted to obtain its own website and domain name. After much discussion board members opted for <http://www.WCGA.net>. In case you're wondering WCGA.org belongs to a golf group, but as one board member pointed out, we are a network of growers, so the .net extension seems to fit very well.

Plans are underway to create a directory of growers that could be accessed by consumers as they search out a source of chestnuts in their area.

Watch for further details in coming issues of the newsletter.



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Food Innovation Center Offers Support to Growers

WCGA's annual meeting was held in a unique location this year. For most attendees the Food Innovation Center, located on the banks of the Willamette River, was a new concept, and of much interest, both because of what they do there and what they can do to support growers both in Oregon and elsewhere.



John Henry Wells, Superintendent and Professor at the FIC, explains their services.

The center is a joint venture between Oregon State University and the Oregon Dept. of Agriculture, and its purpose is to promote agriculture by acting as a facilitator for the independent farmer, with an emphasis on the development of value added products. Working from concept to the market shelf the FIC staff assists the grower in successfully developing and marketing their products. According to John Henry Wells, Superintendent and Professor, they consider themselves a one-stop service for the food industry.

Perceptions of an Infant Chestnut Industry

Following a tour of the facility Aaron Johnson, food business strategy specialist at the center, talked about his perceptions of our infant chestnut industry in the west. He mentioned that there are no produc-

tion records for chestnuts but there is a real potential for growth. The Japanese currently consume 2 lbs. per person, Europeans 1 lb., and only 0.04 lbs. per person are consumed in the U.S. Johnson felt that it was possible to increase consumption and displace imports.

He listed as concerns post harvest conditions, handling by the retailer, consumers' knowledge (or lack thereof) and the variability of the product in terms of quality and taste. It was his opinion that a lack of U.S.D.A. standards was not a problem -- that they may not provide what we want. Of greatest concern he felt, was the competition between growers and the competition between locally produced nuts and imports. He suggested that we want as many barriers as possible to entering the industry.



Aaron Johnson talks about the need for differentiating our product and branding it.

Rivalry will always remain, according to Johnson, both among local growers and with non-WCGA entities. He emphasized the need to minimize the rivalry among local growers and to emphasize a collective effort. In terms of rivalry with outside sources it was his feeling that we need to differentiate our product by branding it and creating an image among consumers that nothing will substitute for our product.



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

On behalf of the new WCGA board, I thank all of you who took the time to attend the Annual Meeting of February 23rd. Food Innovation Center director John Henry Wells, assisted by Aaron Johnson, did a fine job of providing everything necessary for a quality meeting. For those who could not attend, I hope to hear from you or meet with you in the coming year.

Fresh in the minds of the new board is the conversation sparked by Aaron Johnson's reflections on the fledgling domestic chestnut industry. Aaron is the FIC's "Food Business Strategy Specialist" and provided the meeting's keynote presentation. While new to chestnuts, Aaron had a good grasp on what might be ahead and offered a range of suggestions from the relatively simple to sophisticated, about how we might best utilize the WCGA in influencing our common future. While many growers may be satisfied with the current market, increased competition, rivalry among growers, and insufficient prices are always future concerns. We should be wary of the boom and bust cycle so prone to many agricultural products, and use the WCGA to counter that tendency to the best of our ability. Aaron's summary pointed to our advantage over many other producer organizations who are already in a position of trying to lift themselves out of a deep hole.

The technical side of growing and storing chestnuts will always be important because poor product in an emerging marketplace can hurt everyone's opportunities. The WCGA will continue to serve in helping individuals sharpen their personal chestnut skills, but it's time to consider how to mitigate the resulting increased competition and rivalry among our membership.

As the organization matures, the WCGA needs to be doing more for established growers, or we risk alienating them. There must be incentive for their participation and contribution. While we may not be ready for Aaron's suggestion of setting our own standards or "branding" WCGA grown chestnuts, there may be some simple things we can proceed with immediately.

Your new board of directors is interested in taking a pro-active approach rather than standing by and letting others forces determine our fate entirely. The WCGA mission has always been to "promote" chestnuts and it's time to start an organized effort that will expand everyone's opportunities. While we are specifically not a marketing organization, there are some soft approaches which may be appropriate. For the first time, a portion of the budget will be dedicated for promotional activities. We are considering producing educational materials for buyers or consumers, timely press releases, or possibly hosting events. Current policy is that any WCGA event will be self-sustaining. We are also working on details to add a Grower's Directory at our new web site which could serve to link buyers with our grower members. The challenge is to spend our limited resources efficiently and in an equitable manner. Our effort may be relatively small, but it's a start. Your help and advice on these projects is essential.

is in *Christopher H. Foster* WCGA direction and concerns. Your input

EDITOR'S NOTES

If ever there were an annual meeting you shouldn't have missed it was the 2002 meeting. Your president, Chris Foster, and VP, Ben Bole, spent months in the planning stages with folks at the Food Innovation Center to make it happen, and no one walked away without a great deal of knowledge on how to increase profits. Couple that with the goodies that members brought to share at break and the delicious sandwiches Chris arranged for at lunch and I'd say we had a bunch of happy campers.

I've tried to put together a brief summary of the presentations by the FIC staff and also a summary of Jeff Olsen's presentation on the need for potassium in our orchards. Our own orchard had one of the lowest potassium levels when we did the leaf analysis last year, so with Jeff's recommendation we spread 4,000 pounds of potash in the following days. Should I say, "Thank you, Jeff, for helping me take off another pound."

Carolyn

WESTERN CHESTNUT GROWERS ASSN., INC.

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VICE PRESIDENT Ben Bole
SECRETARY-TREASURER Ray Young (360) 887-3669
DIRECTOR Harvey Correia
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COMMITTEES

- Editor Carolyn Young
Phone: (360) 887-4520 FAX: (360) 887-3669
email: Carolyn@ChestnutsOnLine.com

NOTICE

The Western Chestnut is published quarterly by the Western Chestnut Growers Assn., Inc. at PO Box 841, Ridgefield, WA 98642.

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Single membership is \$25 per year per person -- household membership is \$35. Members receive The Western Chestnut quarterly. For foreign delivery contact the Editor for pricing. Back issues may be obtained by members. Membership applications may be obtained from the Secretary-Treasurer.

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Send Address changes to WCGA, c/o PO Box 841, Ridgefield, WA 98642.

ADVERTISING RATES

- Full page, camera ready (w/1 photo) \$20.00
Half page, camera ready (w/1 photo) 15.00
Quarter page..... 10.00
Business card (4 issues) 15.00

One classified ad per member per year is free (max 6 lines, \$2.50 ea add'l 6 lines). Ad space may be reserved with full payment but must meet established deadlines. If ad is cancelled, money may be refunded if space is resold. Make checks payable to Western Chestnut Growers Assn., Inc.

All ads and other copy preferred in PC format on disk or e-mail to Carolyn@ChestnutsOnLine.com. Ads must adhere to published ad sizes for space purchased. Call for specifics. Otherwise for best results, submit original photographs. Layout of ads will not be done until payment is received. Send materials to P.O. Box 841, Ridgefield, WA 98642, or Fedex/Express Mail to 29112 NW 41st Ave., Ridgefield, WA 98642. Call for further info.

PUBLICATION AND DEADLINES

- Fall issue deadline 9/10 mailed 10/1
Winter issue deadline 12/10 mailed 1/1
Spring issue deadline 3/10 mailed 4/1
Summer issue deadline 6/10 mailed 7/1

EDITORIAL OPINION

The views, articles and advertising appearing in The Western Chestnut Quarterly do not necessarily reflect the attitude nor policy of the Western Chestnut Growers Assn., its members, officers, Board of Directors or Editor. The Western Chestnut Growers Assn. Inc., and this publication are not responsible for errors and/or misrepresentations in advertising. The Editor reserves the right to reject or edit all material submitted for publication.

Funding Problems Impact Chestnut Production and Progress in New Zealand

by Ben Bole
Email: BenBole@aol.com

Shortly before the annual meeting Sandy and I visited New Zealand in pursuit of the country's fine wines and possibly some tips on producing chestnuts. We were more successful in the wine category but we did have two interesting days talking about chestnuts and visiting orchards. On the North Island we were hosted by David Klinac, HortResearch Scientist at the Ruakura Research Center outside of Hamilton. We visited several orchards around the Hamilton area and were impressed with the size of the relatively young trees. Hamilton is about 38 degrees south latitude. This is similar to San Francisco, Stockton and Modesto in the Northern Hemisphere. The growing conditions must be ideal since the area was lush and green after an unusually wet summer. We spent several hours with Ray Knowles touring his chestnut collection and talking about the attributes of the many varieties that he has. The common problem of chestnut growers seems to be that of post harvest storage. Ray's approach is to immediately place the chestnuts in cold storage at 30 - 32 degrees F. After a minimum of 24 hours in storage the nuts are sorted to remove the obviously bad ones. The good chestnuts are then placed in 25# vented plastic bags which are then placed in heavy paper bags for extended storage. We saw some chestnuts in Ray's cooler from the previous harvest and they appeared to be in good condition. Some had germinated in the plastic bags.

New Zealand has tried to privatize a number of the state-supported institutions and the research center at Ruakura is one of these. Since the chestnut industry is small in New Zealand it has not been possible to find outside funding for the research projects that were underway or anticipated. One of the victims of the cut back is the test orchard. The trees appear to be healthy for the most part but there is no funding for pruning or research although the orchard had been mowed. The lack of funding is also affecting the need to develop some new varieties that produce chestnuts that are easily peeled. Their best

producing variety today yield a chestnut that is extremely invaginated and very hard to peel although the flavor is certainly acceptable.

New Zealand has tried to privatize a number of the state-supported institutions and the research center at Ruakura is one of these. Since the chestnut industry is small in New Zealand it has not been possible to find outside funding for the research projects that were underway or anticipated.

At the Ruakura Research Center we saw the chestnut sheller/peeler that was developed there as well as the product that it produces. David Klinac described this in an article in the Fall 2001 issue of "The Western Chestnut". We were unable to learn exactly how it operates but it is available for purchase and it may be possible to arrange a test of American chestnuts on this device. Further development of the sheller/peeler is on hold since it also has become a

victim of the lack of funding.

On the South Island we spent a day with Colin Inkster visiting chestnut orchards in the Christchurch area. Christchurch is about 43 degrees South latitude or the same as Roseburg, OR in the Northern Hemisphere. We visited a Lincoln University test orchard, which was also sadly neglected due to the lack of funding. It was badly in need of pruning and had not been harvested the previous season. The seed crops, apples and grapes were being cared for because of their greater impact on New Zealand agriculture but the chestnuts are not receiving much attention.

The growing conditions on the Canterbury Plain of the South Island are exceptional. The orchards, vineyards and lush pastures filled with cattle and sheep reminded us of Oregon's Willamette Valley. All of the chestnut trees that we saw looked healthy and seemed to be thriving although phytophthora is a problem in some instances. The crop is still small but the production was sold and consumed primarily by the Asian community.

Our last stop was a visit with Harvey Smith, a retired professor, who has been growing chestnuts for many years. Harvey has taken a very scientific approach to solving the problems that have confronted him. He does pollination experiments annually in an effort to find a better chestnut for New Zealand. His theories on whether the spores of diseases affecting chestnuts are air borne or water borne are very interesting. Harvey is an experienced grower and uses many innovative devices to produce and sell his crop. New Zealand is a delightful country to visit whether you are in search of wine, chestnuts or relaxation. The people are warm and welcoming and once one adjusts to driving on the left travel is easy.

□□□

Potassium Emphasized as Need in Fertilizing

Leaf analyses completed last summer by growers indicated a deficiency of potassium in many orchards ranging from significantly deficient to low normal. As a result Jeff Olsen, OSU Extension agent, was asked to speak on this topic at the annual meeting in an effort to help growers improve their situation.

According to Olsen, potassium is essential for starch formation, is required as an activator for more than 60 enzymes and encourages root growth by producing larger and more uniformly distributed xylem vessels throughout the root system.

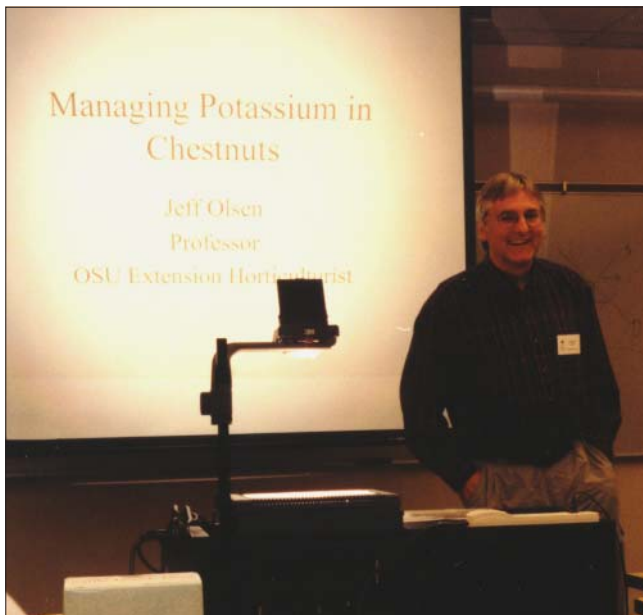
Symptoms of potassium deficiency include a yellowing and/or drying of tissues on the leaf margins or tips. There may be red or brown streaks in the leaf. Symptoms are seen on the older leaves first.

A deficiency as shown in a leaf analysis is seen as anything below 0.50. Below normal is 0.51 – 0.80, normal is 0.81-2.00, and above normal is 2.01-3.00. Anything above 3.0 is excessive. Of the 17 northwest orchards submitting leaf analysis results last year the average orchard had a score of 0.83. The lowest was 0.56 and the highest, 1.18.

To correct the deficiency growers were advised to apply potassium in bands so that it will spread. Potassium has a positive charge while clay is negative. The biggest mistake, according

to Olsen, is not putting it in bands. He suggested applying it by hand in a ring just inside the drip line.

Potassium can be obtained in several forms. Potassium chloride or muriate of potash is 60-63% K₂O. This is what is most commonly found in fertilizer. Potassium sulfate is 50-53% potassium, and potassium nitrate is 44% potassium.. Olsen assured growers who were concerned about applying too much that you couldn't put too much on, although he also cautioned against applying potassium chloride too late in the season (after



Jeff Olsen introduces his topic for the WCGA Annual Meeting: *Managing Potassium in Chestnuts*.

February) because of the potential for salt burn on the leaves. He prefers applying it in the fall. Applying it early ensures there will be adequate rain to wash the salts through the soil. It requires 6" of rain to water it in adequately.

Asked about foliar potassium, said it was best to rely on a ground application.

The application of potassium every five years should be adequate. Annual leaf analyses will help the grower monitor the effectiveness of the application. The recommendation for mature trees with a leaf analysis score less than 0.5 was 8-10 lbs per tree. For scores of 0.5-0.7 the recommendation was 5-6 lbs per mature tree.



Nutrition in a "Good" Chestnut Orchard

by David Klinac
reprinted with permission from
The Chestnutz News

At the recent chestnut hui, and AGM (both held at the Waikato Research Orchard, Hamilton), several people commented on the rapid rate of growth and good overall appearance of the new block of young, machine-planted chestnut trees, especially in light of the minimal care and attention they had received and the lack of fertiliser used.

John Lelieveld (WRO's manager) claims, of course, that it's the superior quality of the trees used (from his own commercial chestnut nursery, on site) that's the secret. Reluctant to admit this, even if it is true, Ray Knowles (rival nurseryman) holds out instead that it must be something special about the site in general, and tree nutrition in particular, that's the secret ingredient. So, to put it to the test, here's the official Roger Hill Laboratories' analysis results (courtesy of Peter Robinson) ...

Soil analysis:

pH.....	5.2	Olsen P.....	22
P retention.....	22	Potassium	0.4
Calcium	2.1	Magnesium ...	0.5
Sodium	0.1	CEC	16.2
base saturation.19%		volume wt...	0.72
K/Mg ratio.....	0.8	organic matter	12.1%
Boron.....	0.6		

These values could all be considered "medium", with the exception of P retention (high) and potassium, calcium, magnesium, boron and base saturation (all low). The nursery, a few hundred metres away, where all the trees came from, showed very similar soil levels (though possibly a bit lower in potassium).

Leaf analysis results were ...

	for 1005	for 1015
N.....	3.2-3.3	2.2
P	0.22-0.25	0.18-0.19
K.....	0.8-0.9	0.6-1.0
S	0.23-0.27	0.16-0.19
Ca	1.26-1.27	0.65-0.95
Mg	0.31-0.38	0.19-0.23
Na.....	0.01-0.03	0.01
Fe.....	89-90	69-76
Mn.....	238-691	279-365
Zn	53-77	37-50
Cu.....	12-15	11-16
B.....	65-80	41-58

...allowing for some tree to tree variation, these are mostly in the “medium” range for 1005, with the possible exception of sodium (low) and nitrogen (high). Most are also “medium” for 1015, with the exception of sodium and possibly also magnesium, potassium and nitrogen (all “low” in some trees sampled).

So next question: how do these values compare to your orchard?

(P.S.: Another contributing factor may be that both Waikato research orchard nursery and field sites have also consistently tested “clean in routine soil sampling and testing for P cinnamomi root rot.)

Editor’s note: “1005” and “1015” are the two main commercial cultivars in New Zealand. They are European/Japanese hybrids. No one has ever been able to come up with a name for them. Hence, the numbers.

The trees in question are 2-3 years old and are just producing for the first time this year. Harvest is within the next few weeks.

I thought it interesting that Jeff Olsen, in his presentation at the annual meeting stated that the normal potassium range is 0.81 - 2.00. The average of the WCGA orchards reporting was 0.83, on the low end of normal. It appears that these New Zealand trees have similar levels, yet are considered “good” trees.

□□□

...and from the New Zealand Chestnut Council, Inc. Chairman

Harvest is coming,
The burrs are getting fat.
Please to put a penny in the chestnut grower’s hat.
If you haven’t got a penny,
A ha’ penny will do.
If you haven’t got a ha’ penny,
Then keep hoping that something will come along eventually.

Do you have your copy of the WCGA logo yet? If not you can obtain it from the Editor for use in advertising and packaging.

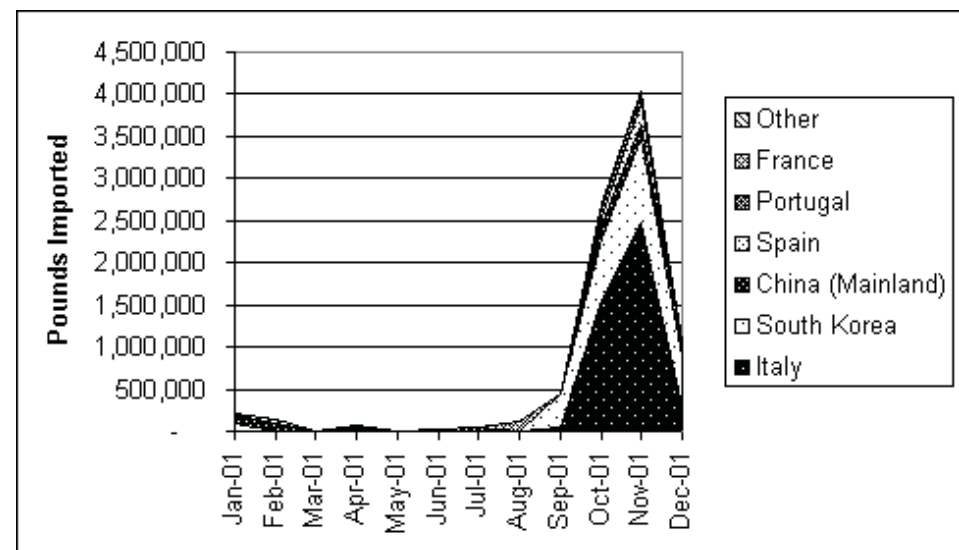
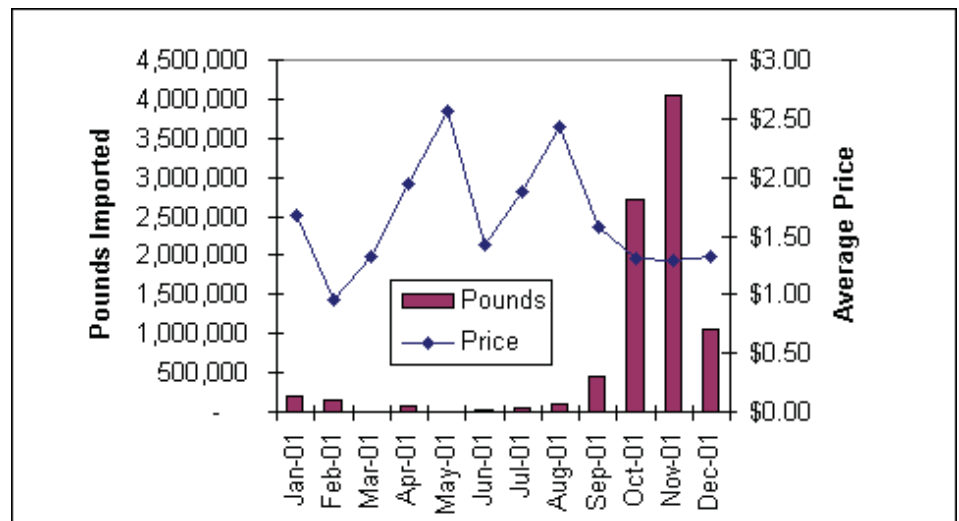
2001 Chestnut Imports Increase Significantly from 2000

by Harvey Correia
harvey@chestnutsdirect.com

Some of the information presented by Aaron Johnson of the Food Innovation Center during our recent annual meeting reminded me of USDA import statistics I had previously looked into. I decided to get updated information (available at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/so/view.asp?f=trade/fau-bb/>) and provide some of this information for the benefit of other members.

I’ve developed the price per pound by using the import value and metric ton information included in the USDA reports. The import statistics do not break out the types of chestnut products and average prices from April through August appears to be heavily influenced by the processed products. Calendar 2001 saw total imports of 8,864,963 pounds at an average price of \$1.34. This compares to 8,057,573 pounds and \$1.24 in 2000.

Italy is the largest exporter to the U.S. with 50% of 2001 import volume. Korea is second with 32% although Korea does have 84% of the early imports in September. Mainland China is third at 9%. Below are some charts that provide some additional details for 2001.



The Cook's Corner



Special thanks to member Nancy Pettit, Delmarvelous Chestnuts, Townsend, DE, for this palate-pleasing recipe.

Butternut Squash Stuffed with Sausage Chestnuts are used to bind the mixture together, adding a subtle nuttiness that mixes nicely with the butternut flavors. You can substitute acorn squash, if butternut is unavailable.

Servings: 4

Ingredients:

- 2 butternut squash, about 1 lb each
- 2 oz unsalted butter
- 2 tbs maple syrup
- 1 pinch ground cinnamon
- 1 pinch grated nutmeg
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp black pepper
- 1 lb pork sausage, bulk
- 1 Granny Smith apple, peeled, chopped
- 1/4 cup chestnuts, roasted and finely chopped
- 1/2 tsp salt and freshly cracked black pepper, to taste

Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C). Cut each squash in half lengthwise, and scoop out the seeds and fibrous material. In a medium saucepan, melt the butter, stir in the syrup, cinnamon, nutmeg, salt, and pepper. Add 1 or 2 tablespoons of this mixture to the

hollow center of each squash and brush it on the cut surface of the squash. Reserve the rest.

Bake the squash uncovered, cut side up, for about 40 minutes, or until the flesh is partially cooked. Meanwhile prepare the stuffing. In a large bowl, mix the sausage, apple, and chestnuts.

Remove the squash from the oven, and pour the liquid from the center of each half into this mixture. Scoop out some of the partially cooked flesh from the squash shells to expand the cavity. Chop this rough mixture and mix into the stuffing. Adjust flavor with salt and pepper. Stuff the squash with the stuffing. Brush the squash with a little melted butter and maple syrup. Cover with foil and bake 35-40 minutes more.

Nutritional Info: Serving Size 14.0 oz.
Per Serving Calories: 642, Cholesterol: 120mg, Carbohydrate: 46g, Protein: 25g,

*Have a recipe you'd like to share?
Send it to the Editor,
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Western Chestnut Growers' Assn., Inc.
Minutes of the General Meeting
Feb. 23, 2002

- Call to order: The meeting was called to order by President, Ben Bole, at 3:05 p.m. at the Food Innovation Center, Portland, OR.
- President's report: Ben reported that the California orchard tour had been successful and was a real eye-opener to those attending from the Northwest.
- He reported that the organization now had a logo.
- The decision was made by the board to increase the dues to \$25.00 to cover the cost of maintaining a website of our own. The current site is donated by members.
- Ben reported that 2001 was a good year for most growers and said he had experienced some storage problems. He talked about the need for value-added products and that if we have standards we need to consider all varieties.
- Those who had helped during the years were thanked including Sandy Bole for her work in getting the logo designed, Harvey Correia for organizing the California tour, Ray Young for his work in preparing the bylaws revision proposal, Carolyn Young for her efforts on the newsletter and Chris Foster for his continual support.
- Secretary/Treasurer: Ray Young distributed a summary of income and expenses for the organization. Harvey Correia moved and John Schroeder seconded a motion to approve the treasurer's report. Ray announced that the books were open to anyone who had questions at any time.
- Committee Reports:
- Newsletter: Carolyn Young reported that she is distributing about 100 copies of each issue to members in 15 states and Canada. She asked members to let her know of any good articles they thought would be worthy of reprint and invited any member to submit articles. She also mentioned that every member gets a free ad once a year and encouraged people to take advantage of that.
- Website: Carolyn reported that the WCGA website had 1500 hits from 36 countries between 2/1/01 and 2/1/02 and that people are using it as a source of information from the organization including downloading forms for registration at this meeting.
- Clothing: Sandy Bole reported on clothing sales and said that order forms were available to anyone who wished to order today.
- Old Business:
- Bylaws: Sandy Bole moved and Dan Keeley seconded a motion to accept the proposed revision of the bylaws. There was debate including the following: Dan Keeley said he did not like having a requirement of 10% of the members in order to run for office by petition. Randy Coleman expressed displeasure with the election procedures that were detailed. He did not like having only one candidate for office and felt there should be district representation. Motion passed – 18 for, 8 opposed.
- New Business:
- Election: Election of officers took place. John Keeley moved and John Schroeder seconded a motion to cast a unanimous vote for the slate of officers. Motion passed. The new officers are President: Chris Foster, Vice President: Ben Bole, Secretary/Treasurer: Ray Young, Directors: Harvey Correia, Lucienne Grunder, Peggy Paul and Bob Schilpzand.
- Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Ray Young, Secretary/Treasurer

*See p. 8 F.I.C.,
F.I.C., from p. 1*

Several members felt that the WCGA logo was a start in the right direction.

There was emphasis on the need to provide a consistent product to the consumer. We need to eliminate storage issues that degrade the nut quality. We need to work with produce managers and/or retailers to assure that the product is displayed properly. We need to differentiate by variety.

Johnson emphasized the need for standards but stated that the U.S.D.A. standards would not convey useful information to the public, and that is the need. He felt that the most logical approach was for WCGA to develop its own internal set of standards. He summarized by saying that the chestnut industry has a great potential even though we face increased rivalry and the threat of losing the premium market, and that we need to create a differentiated product that is branded.

Interesting Comments on Flavor from New Zealand

The October, 2001 issue of the New Zealand Chestnut Action Group South Island newsletter discussed the importance of flavor in chestnuts. A former New Zealander, living in Italy reported back that in Italy chestnuts are consumed with wine and flavour is of secondary importance!!! He is quoted as saying that "chestnuts are eaten when the new wine has been made and we are pressing the olive oil and trying a bottle or two of the wine. It has been like this for centuries."

□□□

Visit the WCGA Website

www.WCGA.net

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Don't forget that your business card ad can appear for only \$15 for 4 issues.

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Contact Sandy Bole if you have questions.

2002 Membership Renewal / Application

Western Chestnut Growers Assn., Inc.

(Please print)

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First Last

Farm/Business/Organization Name.....

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City State/Province..... Zip/Postal Code.....

Phone () Fax ()

Email:..... Website URL:.....

Date.....

\$25.00 individual membership
 \$35.00 household membership
 \$26.50 Canadian members
 Ttl amount enclosed: \$_____

The following information is **voluntary** on your part, but will help your association better understand the growth and status of the chestnut industry. Check those boxes that apply:

- Commercial Grower Prospective Commercial Grower Researcher/Educator Hobbyist
- Nursery Consultant Vendor

Acreage in chestnuts: _____ acres Chestnuts first planted in year: _____ Not yet planted

Percentage of seedlings: _____

- Sell grafted trees Sell seedlings Sell scion wood Sell seed nuts Sell chestnuts retail
- Sell chestnuts wholesale Sell mail order Sell on-line Sell at farmers' markets
- Sell at farm stand

Varieties grown: _____

2001 Production: _____

Send this form with your check (\$25.00 individual membership, \$35.00 household membership) made payable to Western Chestnut Growers Assn., Inc. to Ray Young, Secy/Treas, PO Box 841, Ridgefield, WA 98642.