

U of MO Annual Market Survey Continues as the Grower's Best Friend

Mike Gold, Associate Director of the School of Agroforestry at the University of Missouri, and his former colleague, Ina Cernusca now at North Dakota State University, once more provide growers with a survey to determine where we're headed in the chestnut industry in this country. Without it we wouldn't know if we were making progress or going backwards, we wouldn't know if things were improving or not and we wouldn't have a good feeling for how to move forward.

The survey was sent to both current and former members of CGA and 80 growers responded, three fourths of them identifying themselves as growers/sellers/value-added producers. Value-added products included dried chestnuts and chestnut flour and a few products. Those selling nursery stock indicated that they sell both seedlings and grafted stock. Sixty-six percent of the growers have less than 10 acres in production with 26% of the growers planning to increase their chestnut acreage.

It was encouraging to see that 55% of those responding reported overall yields higher for 2014 than 2013. This may be the result of younger orchards increasing in production as trees mature. Those who reported lower yields cited things like no irrigation system in place or extremely cold weather during the summer.

It was interesting to learn that a few people felt the overall quality of the nuts was better because of a lower incidence of blossom end rot.

Somewhat surprising was the fact that while 40% of the growers are using organic methods only a few are USDA certified.

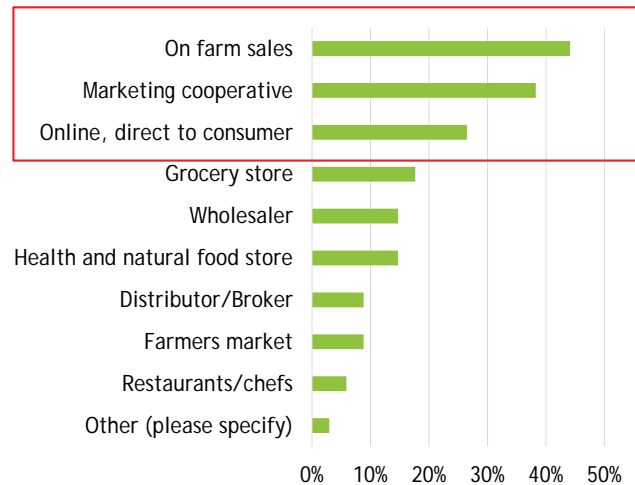
The total chestnut production reported for 2014 was 225,635 pounds, with 26% reporting production between 10,000 and 50,000 pounds. Sixty six percent of those responding

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The 2014/15 marketing season

Market outlets



The 2014/15 marketing season

Prices

Outlet	Price range
Marketing cooperative	\$1.30 - \$4.00
Farmers market	\$2.00 - 6.50
Restaurants/chefs	\$3.85 - \$4.50
Distributor/Broker	\$2.51 - 4.40
Health and natural food store	\$3.50 - \$5.20
Grocery store	\$2.80 - \$4.40
Wholesaler	\$2.25 - \$4.40
Online, direct to consumer	\$4.00 - \$8.00
On farm sales	\$2.00 - \$8.00

have less than 10 acres planted, with only 16% having 20 acres or more.

It was interesting to see where growers are selling their crop and that the majority of the sales are at the farm and that the second most common sales are to a co-op, yet when one looks at the prices being obtained, those selling to a co-op appear to be getting the least profit for their efforts, with those selling either on-line or directly from their farm getting the greatest profit.

One has to ask why 10% of our growers

report gross incomes of \$50,000 or more, yet 51% report gross less than \$5,000. Perhaps this is an area that needs to be explored. If a good income is possible for some it should be possible for all.

Mike emphasized, once again, the need to **not undervalue our crop** and to consider all the costs that have gone into producing it.

The Power Point presentation of the survey is now available on CGA's website in the "Members Only" section.



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

At the time this newsletter is being published many of you will have attended our Chestnut Growers of America 2015 Annual Meeting at Stockton, California. I want to thank all the presenters and Harvey Correia for hosting a fantastic meeting for all of our CGA members. Harvey is a great example of how to market chestnuts and meet the needs of his customers. Harvey Correia's Orchard is the only chestnut orchard in the country devoted exclusively to marrone, the only orchard that operates on solar power and a sophisticated fertigation system in use today. Harvey demon-

strated to us some very good processes in orchard maintenance.

I think you will all agree that the presentation from Dr. Linda Harris, a UC Davis Extension specialist in microbial food safety who specializes in nuts gave us a very in-depth discussion about the requirements that all of us will be required to meet when the Food Safety Modernization Act is fully implemented. As chestnut growers we need to be ready to make the appropriate changes for our chestnut orchard operations.

It was great to visit equipment dealer Flory Industries, manufacturer of both sweepers and harvesters sold all over the world. I think all of us learned something we could use in our orchards.

As usual, one of the best things about our annual meeting is the opportunity to talk with fellow growers, and Friday night's welcome party was fun for all. Everyone had a wonderful time in discussing chestnuts and more chestnuts.

Once again, I want to thank both Carolyn and Ray Young for all their efforts throughout the year for CGA and the great Annual Meeting we had this year in Stockton, California.

Remember the purpose of CGA is to promote chestnuts, to disseminate information to growers of chestnuts, to improve communications between growers within the industry, to support research and breeding work and generally to further the interests and knowledge of Chestnut Growers. CGA advocates the delivery of only high quality chestnuts to the marketplace. As members of CGA, I hope you can help us grow CGA and bring new members to our organization.

I hope you all have a wonderful summer and your chestnut production is a record year.

Roger V. Blackwell

If you missed the annual meeting and conference in Stockton you missed a great event. It's the one time a year we've got an opportunity to talk with other growers from around the country and this year, from Europe as well.

The Friday night party turned into a grazing event highlighted by the chestnut-smoked salmon made famous by Linda Black in Illinois a few years back.

Growers were amazed at the Cabral Agricultural Center where the meeting was held. A finer facility could not exist. It's proof that California's central valley is one of the country's most important agricultural areas.

You'll want to make sure that you reserve the dates for next year's meeting at the U of MO -- June 10-11-12, 2016.

Presentations from this year's event will be found on the "Members Only" page of the CGA website -- <http://www.chestnutgrowers.org>. And speaking of the website, we are desperately in need of recipes with photos. If you've got a great one hiding in your kitchen somewhere, make it and take some photos. Remember, the Recipes page is where we're trying to convince our customers that they need our chestnuts to do the job.

Carolyn

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Full page, camera ready \$20.00
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Quarter page \$10.00
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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 Chestnut Growers of America, Inc.

All ads and other copy preferred in PC format. Email to Carolyn@ChestnutsOnLine.com. Ads must adhere to published ad sizes for space purchased. Call for specifics. 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.

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Editorial Opinion

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The Editor reserves the right to reject or edit all material submitted for publication.

CGA Hosts 2015 Annual Meeting in Stockton

The Robert J. Cabral Agricultural Center, Stockton, California, was the site of the annual meeting and conference, June 13.

The annual meeting revealed a healthy treasury and announced officers and directors for the year including President Roger Blackwell, Vice President, David English, Secre-



The Robert J. Cabral Agricultural Center is just five years old and a real showpiece in the ag world of California's Central Valley.

tary/Treasurer, Ray Young, and Directors, Sandy Bole, Tom Wahl, Bob Wallace and Lee Williams.

Harvey Correia talked about his orchard which is truly unique in the United States. His orchard was converted over from the original planting of Colossals to Marrones some years ago. He uses a fertigation system for applying fertilizer and has a solar system for providing backup power. Unique as well is his soil solution testing done monthly during the growing system. His talk was an introduction to what would be seen by attendees on Sunday morning.



Harvey Correia

Dr. Linda Harris, food safety specialist at U.C. Davis, guided attendees through the

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many aspects of the Food Safety Modernization Act that would affect them as growers.

There are a number of major rules that will apply including mandated inspection frequency, mandatory recall, expanded records access, suspension of registration, enhanced product tracing and third party testing.

The producer Safety Rule affects 35,503 US farms.

There is concern about irrigation water touching the harvestable crop. Dr. Harris' lab has a spreadsheet that will calculate values and tell you if you comply or if your water quality profile complies.

This first thing that will take place with FSMA is training, starting with training of trainers. The University of Florida is really ahead on training, according to Dr. Harris.



Dr. Linda Harris, UC Davis

Help for growers will most likely come from our cooperative extension offices.

Several websites that may be of help to growers include the following:

<http://producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu>

<http://www.iit.edu/ifsh/alliance>

<http://www.fda.gov/fsma>

A copy of Dr. Harris' presentation can be found at <http://ucfoodsafety.ucdavis.edu/files/215006.pdf> and can be found on the CGA website "Members Only" page.



Mike Gold, U of MO

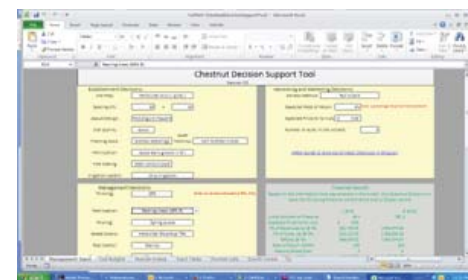
Mike Gold, U of MO, spoke about the most recent market survey completed. He said there were approximately 650 acres reported. About 40% of those reporting are using organic farming methods.

Of those reporting a total of 225,635 lbs were produced in 2014. Higher yields were reported by 55% for the 2014 season.

On farm sales appear to be most popular.

There was discussion on how the survey was done. One person said he would really like to print out his answers. Another mentioned the possible need for a separate survey for a co-op, citing the possibility of a person answering one way for

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The Chestnut Decision Support Tool was created as an Excel spreadsheet.



Lively discussion took place during Saturday presentations.

the nuts being sold directly from the farm, answering another way for nuts being sent to a co-op.

The second part of Mike's presentation was about the Chest



Flory Industries, maker of nut harvesting and sweeping equipment for many years, is located in Salida, CA.



Flavio Alfaro talks about Sandy Harrison's orchard with Davor and Mirjana Juretic, growers from Croatia.



Fertigation system at the orchard of Harvey Correia in Isleton, CA.

Contd from p. 3

nut Decision Support Tool (version 2), developed by Larry Godsey, economist for the University of Missouri, Center for Agroforestry. It analyzes every conceivable expense and all income to determine a grower's net profit and break-even point. The tool will be available on the "Members Only" page of the CGA website.

The traditional raffle was held at the conclusion of lunch and the CGA Board wishes to thank all those who donated the raffle prizes. Raffle prizes help to keep the cost of the conference affordable.

Saturday afternoon the group traveled south to Salida where they visited Flory Industries, makers of sweepers and harvesters. Rod Flory was kind enough to come in on a Saturday afternoon to show us their operation. The Flory

family moved to Salida in 1910, and migrated from a 100 cow dairy to manufacturing of harvesting equipment in 1961 and to harvesters, sweepers and other equipment currently.

The company is considered one of the leaders in the field of nut-harvesting equipment with sales world-wide.

Sunday morning began with a tour at Harvey Correia's in Isleton. He talked about his trees, showed his fertigation system, his solar panels and did a grafting demonstration.

Following lunch at The Point in Isleton was a visit to Sandy Harrison's orchard in Gridley. This productive 7-acre orchard harvested 20,000 lbs last year.

Sandy, with her son-in-law Flavio Alfaro, is in the midst of setting up their own processing line.

The conference was deemed a success and we look forward to attending next year's gala at the University of Missouri.



Planting American Chestnut in Pots: Tips for a Successful Growing Experience

a TCF Fact Sheet reprinted courtesy of The American Chestnut Foundation

The American Chestnut Foundation is a non-profit conservation organization dedicated to the restoration of the American chestnut tree. For additional information, please visit: www.acf.org.

Editor's Note: CGA receives questions and comments on a regular basis. One of the questions that comes up regularly is how to propagate chestnuts. The ACF fact sheet, reprinted here, does a good job of describing the process as it pertains to all chestnuts.

Planting Date

Planting American chestnuts in pots is a great way to prep your chestnut trees before your spring planting. Like many nuts, American chestnuts need to go through



Figure 1

extended cold exposure, as they would in nature. This process is called stratification and it takes approximately 2-3 months for chestnuts to stratify properly. Nuts should remain in cold storage (think vegetable crisper) until at least January. In general, you want to start your chestnuts in pots about 2-3 months before your area is ready for spring planting.

Planting Container

American chestnut has a long tap root that needs plenty of room to grow, so use a container that is much deeper than it is wide. If you would just like to get a jump on spring and plant your tree outside once the weather is warm enough, a smaller pot is fine. We recommend a container 10" deep or more, like the Stuewe Deepot D40. You can even use something like an old milk or orange juice carton (make sure to poke some drainage holes in the bottom). If the tree will remain in the pot for most

of the year, or longer, a larger pot is more appropriate. In these cases, a pot like the Stuewe TreePot or large 1-2 gallon container will be better suited for longer-term storage.

Planting Mix

A soilless planting mix is best for providing good drainage and a weed-free germination environment for your chestnuts. Soilless planting mixes tend to include a lot of peat moss, which can be difficult to get wet. It is often easier to wet the planting mix in a larger container so you can work the water in by mixing (think kneading dough, see Figure 1). When choosing a planting mix, remember that American chestnuts do not like to be too wet, so keep this, as well as your own habits, in mind.

A simple mix of 1/3 each peat moss, perlite and vermiculite is a great high-drainage mix that many chestnut growers use. This mix does not hold too much moisture however, so if you forget to water your trees on a regular basis you should look for a mix that holds a little more moisture, like Sun Gro Metro-Mix 560 Coir. Water will often bead up and runoff very dry peat moss, so pre-wetting your mix is helpful.

Planting the Seed

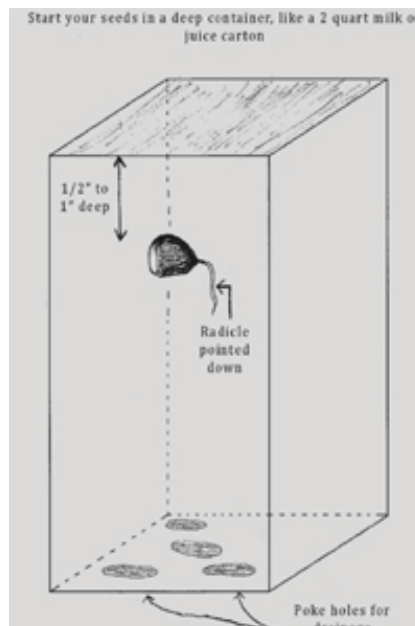


Figure 2

Fill a pot with damp planting mix, tamp

down and then poke a hole in the center with your finger or a hand spade. Often chestnuts will begin to sprout in cold storage so gently work the radicle (young root) into the hole until the nut is just below the soil surface. American chestnuts should be planted shallowly - a half-inch to one-inch deep. Do not break the radicle when you plant (this may kill the seed), and make sure you position the nut so that the pointed end, where the radicle comes out, is facing sideways (NOT UP OR DOWN!)

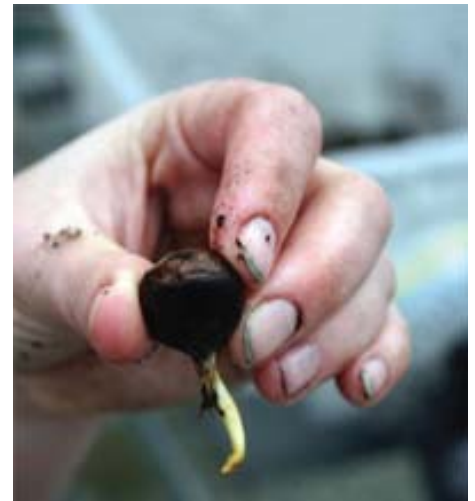


Figure 3

Chestnuts will often sprout while in cold storage and the radicle, or young root, can require a little extra care when planting. To plant, hold the nut sideways so the pointed end, where the radicle emerges, is facing sideways and the radicle is pointing down as much as possible.

Carefully work the radicle down into the

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Figure 4

Planting in Pots, contd from p. 5

soil so the nut rests ½ - 1" below the soil surface. If the radicle has emerged at an odd angle, the point of the nut can face down into the pot, but never plant with the point facing up. Place your newly-potted nut in a warm, sunny location. It should sprout within a week or two.

Seedling Care

Water your chestnut sparingly and allow the pot to dry out some between waterings. If the planting mix stays too wet, the nut may rot before it sprouts. Once sprouted, the seedling will need more water so adjust as needed. And of course, keep an eye on the temperatures. Water needs increase as temperatures increase and the winter sun can be warmer than you might expect.

As with caring for any living thing, vigilance is the key so check your seedling regularly. Most issues can be remedied if caught quickly.

Planting Outside

When you are ready to plant your seedling outside, remember that it will be much farther along in its development than if it had sprouted naturally and should be planted outside after risk of frost. Also remember that the seedling is accustomed



Never place the nut with the point facing up.

to the protected environment inside and needs to slowly acclimate to conditions outside. This process is called "hardening-off" and should take at least two weeks. Transplanting can be stressful on a plant, so properly hardening-off your seedling will improve the odds for success.

A final tip – remove the remnant nut from the base of the seedling. At this point the seedling has used all the nutrients it needs from the nut, but the nut can still be attractive to rodents and other wildlife.

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The hit of Friday night's Welcome Party was the chestnut smoked salmon. The recipe is from Linda Black and was served at the Welcome Party hosted in Illinois a few years back.

- 2 Salmon filets -- skinless
- 1/8 C Sea salt
- 1/4 C Packed brown sugar
- 4 C Water
- 2 large handfuls chestnut chips from limbs
- Seasoning salt or garlic salt
- Fresh dill and capers

Prepare the brine using the sea salt, brown sugar and water. Sprinkle the salmon with the seasoning salt or garlic -- very lightly. Place the salmon in a plastic bag in a container -- a broiler pan works well -- and pour in the brine. Let it soak for 3-4 hours in the refrigerator. Too long may make it too salty.

Prepare the smoker using the chestnut wood. Place each filet on a double layer of aluminum foil and fold the edges so that they are close to the fish. When the smoker is hot place the salmon (on the aluminum foil) on the

rack or if it is too small to accommodate even one filet place it on a piece of 1/4" galvanized hardware cloth so that it gently curves up and prevents the salmon from breaking apart. Smoke for about 35-40 minutes or the temperature is 140°. The second filet will be smoked when the first is done. Top with fresh dill and capers.



CGA Implements New Website to Meet Today's Needs

Use it on your smart phone, your tablet or your desktop computer

When we bought our first Apple in 1980 we thought we had the neatest thing since sliced bread and we were proud when we did our first upgrade from a keyboard with all upper case to a keyboard with both! Earth-shattering! Little did we know where computers would take us all, or the opportunities that would come about for all of us as growers.

CGA's first website was launched in 2000 as a source of information for both growers and consumers, and as a place where growers could make their presence known to potential customers. It did its job, but like everything else websites changed and CGA's became outdated. Mobile devices weren't around in 2000 so there was no need to design the site to accommodate them. Photos were nice but overly used at that time. Consumers weren't as demanded as they have become. Today information is king and our customers want more and more.

In particular, our customers want to know what we do and how we do it. They want to know about the nutrition of the products you sell. And most importantly, they want to know something about you as a grower. The new site has all these things.

Your board wanted a restricted area (password protected) within the site accessible only to CGA members. In it would be the most up to date detailed information available anywhere on the web about chestnuts. It would contain links to articles and videos and would have the complete library of every CGA newsletter published since it began in 2000. In addition it would use responsive design to make it usable on a desktop computer, laptop, tablet and even a smartphone.

The Homepage, shown above right acts as an introduction, contains a snippet about coming events and makes a membership application available along with an email contact for the association.

The Recipes page is desperately in need of more recipes with photos. Your input would be greatly appreciated here. Your customers are coming here for reasons to buy your chestnuts. Recipes will help to drive the demand.

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CGA's Homepage provides an introduction to the association.



The first time you log in to the "Members Only" page you will need to enter your login and password. These were emailed to you when you renewed your membership. If you've forgotten click on the "here" and it will be sent again.



The "Members Only" page is filled with literally hundreds of links to information for growers.

The Growers' page provides an easy to use method for customers to find growers in their state or at least reasonably close to them, and it gives you, as that grower, the opportunity to showcase your orchard. For the first time growers have the opportunity to use a photo and a few hundred words to describe what they do. This builds

trust in you. Now your customer knows something about you and that's important in the market place.

The Resources page is more of a teaser than a real source of much information. Its intent is to motivate the user to join the association. The main source of information is found on the "Members Only" page and just about everything you might want to know about growing chestnuts is there. It contains links to videos and articles of interest and to every issue of the newsletter that's been published. Currently there are 330 links to information about chestnuts. There is no source out there on the internet with more chestnut information, and it's all yours for the asking.

The site is organized into three sections. On the left is a list of newsletters with links to their pdf files. The right column is organized by category, and there are 25 of them. The center section contains a list of the articles and/or videos with the information available and it's also organized by category. If you're looking for something and it exists it's probably here. Enjoy!

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It's not too early to start planning for National Chestnut Week, the second full week of October when everyone has nuts available.

This year it's Sunday, Oct. 11 through Saturday, Oct. 17.

Plan a chestnut festival, an open house, a farm tour.

Let your local paper know what you're doing. It's a great marketing opportunity!



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