



THE CHESTNUT GROWER

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This Year, National Chestnut Week is October 9-15

National Chestnut Week is the second full week in October - Sunday through Saturday - a time when fresh chestnuts are available everywhere in the country. This year that's October 9-15. Sales are typically heaviest in November and December so the hope is that celebrating NCW in October will help increase sales earlier in the season, thus lengthening the sales period.

If you've never hosted an event, consider doing it this year, or start thinking about what you can do next year. There are only

a couple weeks left to plan if you haven't already done so, but it's never too late to do something. It can be as simple as an open house with tours of the orchard to a major event with the types of activities that draw tourists from nearby areas. In any case, it's a time when you'll have fresh chestnuts available for sale.

NCW provides a unique marketing opportunity for growers - a specific event for chestnuts nationwide. Newspapers and local radio stations are likely much more interested in publicizing events than in

covering generic chestnut articles, so be sure to take advantage.

What if every grower in the country hosted an open house at their orchard sometime during National Chestnut Week? Or maybe there's a community celebration or fair where you could have a booth. Look for ideas to get you started on page 11.

This upcoming week is an excellent opportunity to draw attention to chestnuts! Don't be afraid to try something. Everyone's contributions can help grow the industry. ☺

Missouri Chestnut Roast Highlights Specialty Crops

by Mike Gold, University of Missouri Center for Agroforestry · GoldM@missouri.edu

The Missouri Chestnut Roast was launched in 2003 for two reasons: 1) to introduce unfamiliar US consumers to all the wonderful things about eating and cooking with chestnuts; and 2) to showcase the University of Missouri Center for Agroforestry's comprehensive research program for developing the Chinese chestnut as a nut crop to bring the chestnut back to the nation's dinner (and dessert) plates.

Back in 2003, there were already numerous fall harvest festivals ongoing throughout Missouri. Pumpkin festivals, black walnut festivals, pecan festivals, and so on. However, seeking something unique to draw in the general public, the Center was aware that there were no chestnut festivals (to our knowledge) in Missouri or sur-

rounding states. Therefore, with its focus on perennial specialty crops, the Center decided to create an event to showcase new potential enterprises for the family farm. That event became known as the Missouri Chestnut Roast. In the summer of 2003, the Center sent its "event planner" to a festival in Ohio to gather ideas, and the Missouri Chestnut Roast was launched in October of 2003.

The Missouri Chestnut Roast is a one-day event, rain or shine, held on an open grassy knoll with a number of large tents housing numerous activities for all ages. The Roast grew in popularity over the next 7 years and typically drew crowds of 4,000 to the research farm for a beautiful fall outing in the scenic Missouri River Hills. The Roast quickly became the signature outreach event for the Center featuring Missouri's perennial specialty crops and value-added products.

The Roast features fall family fun with chestnuts as the major draw. Activities include free samples of fire-roasted Missouri-grown chestnuts, fresh chestnuts for sale, specialty crop trees for sale both as grafted trees or seedlings (chestnut,

pawpaw, pecan, walnut, oak, etc.), live music, activities for children, displays and sales of Missouri specialty agricultural products with over 20 vendors selling their products, farm tours, chestnut cooking demonstrations, and other presentations of interest.

Attending the Roast creates the opportunity for consumers unfamiliar with chestnuts to learn about chestnut nutrition and the multitude of ways in which chestnuts can be prepared and served. This is part of a "market pull strategy" to get consumers interested in shopping for chestnuts and growers seeking producers to supply the chestnuts sought by the consumers.

Local chefs prepare recipes that incorporate chestnuts and local foods during cooking demonstrations. Attendees can watch the process and taste these one-of-a-kind chestnut creations. Vendors feature a variety of locally grown agricultural specialty products including chestnut, pecan, and walnut products, elderberry products, wines, whiskey, and specialty beers, ice cream, mustard, goat cheeses, etc. There are also guided bus and walking tours of

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



David and his daughters, Jennifer and Elizabeth, in Washington, DC

I hope this message finds everyone busy with the harvest! Many of you are seeing a bigger crop than last year. Congratulations!

My focus in this message is on chestnut quality. It is the perfect time to review all the essential components of selling the perfect chestnut.

These days the internet can tell you just about anything you want to know about growing, harvesting, washing, sorting, bagging, storing, packaging, and shipping chestnuts. Our CGA website has archived articles about all these issues and I encourage all our members to take advantage of what is available. Whether selling through a website, through a local co-op, at a local farmers' market, or even if customers come to your farm and buy or pick themselves, having a quality product matters. The more they like what they see, the more they tell their friends and the more the business grows.

Customers want chestnuts that are fresh, have good color, and are free of imperfections like scratches, cuts, holes, or split skin. How often are you able to see

the chestnuts to make sure you catch these problems? During the harvest? During the washing and sorting? The bagging and storage? You get the picture. Even how chestnuts are sized can be problematic. There is nothing more frustrating than a bag of what should be your largest nuts being sold to someone who then wants to know what all those little nuts are doing in that premium bag they just bought.

Or worse yet, after shipment, a customer is calling you about moldy chestnuts, or maybe even a torn box, or some of the bags came untied and nuts have spilled out. Ouch! Were the chestnuts packed incorrectly given the distance shipped? Were they too wet? Did you have the right mix of anti-mold agent in your wash? If you belong to a co-op, did you deliver chestnuts that were refused because they were not cleaned or sorted enough, or there were too many floaters because of a cold storage requirement you didn't understand? Does your pre-shipping process need review?

As you can see, opportunities for quality control occur as the first nuts hit the ground until the last nut is sold.

Two years ago I had a customer call me about a problem shipment they received from another grower. I was glad to be able to ship an order that renewed his faith in the chestnut industry. Customers tell other potential customers about their problems and that puts a strain on the whole industry. We cannot stress enough the need to make sure we all sell quality chestnuts.

All the best in this harvest season!

David English

Chestnut Growers of America, Inc.
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Editorial Opinion

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National Chestnut Week and Agritourism: Your Source for Added Income

by Carolyn Young, Allen Creek Farm, Ridgefield, WA · carolyn@chestnutsonline.com

This year, National Chestnut Week is October 9-15. You can take advantage of the recent boom in the agritourism industry by hosting your own event to celebrate this special week. It can end up being really profitable if done well.

Here's how we have pulled off our signature Chestnut Festival:

Many years ago a few chestnut growers in the northwest were sitting around discussing the possibility of starting a National Chestnut Week. Some laughed out loud but others thought, "Why not?" There's every other kind of week out there. And so we tried contacting our folks in Congress to ask if they would sponsor such a week and they didn't even respond. So why wait for an official governmental endorsement? We'll just do it! And we did, with the board's blessing. We looked for a week when all growers in the country should have nuts available and decided on the second full week of October. This year that falls on Oct. 9 – 15.

Taking advantage of agritourism

Understanding that not everything you try is going to be successful, you have to be ready to fail. But so what? That's how you learn. And we did. Some things work and some things don't. What you'll see here is what works, or at least what's worked for us.

Agritourism is big throughout the country now. People want to see what happens on a farm and a trip from their neighborhood out to the country is cheap entertainment for the family. Our farm, now sold, lies about 15 miles north of Portland, Oregon, and draws a lot of people from that area. That weekend is also Birdfest in our

little town of Ridgefield so there are even more folks who could visit. We have a national wildlife refuge in town so birds are a biggie here.

Getting the word out

We've called our event a Chestnut Festival and schedule it from 10:00 – 5:00 on a Saturday. Our local paper has a calendar section that comes out each Friday and we make sure they include us with a small write-up. (That's free.) We put fliers in town in the windows of the library, the community center, the hardware store, the post office, the bank ... (That's free.) We've got a database of over 10,000 customers with whom we've dealt since we started

Story continues on next page...

Chestnut Growers,

There's plenty to learn in this issue about National Chestnut Week and promoting chestnuts this time of year. Harvest is a busy season, and it's easy to let slide new ideas for marketing your crop. Even if you don't have time to use any of these ideas this year, start thinking about next year, and then start planning early.

If you are celebrating chestnuts in your community this season, we want to hear your success stories! Learning from each other is the best reason to be a member of the CGA.

What bumps in the road did you run into leading up to and during the harvest this year? How did you tackle those challenges? Tell your fellow growers by sending me your thoughts – my contact info is on the opposite page.

Maybe you don't have any pearls of wisdom, but maybe you do have questions, or a topic you'd like to learn more about. Send those to me also – I'll track down folks who have answers or experience. Don't be shy about raising your hand – as you know, others probably have the same questions.

Speaking of getting answers, we are working on ways to move helpful discussions between CGA growers online and make them available to everyone, as was discussed at the annual meeting. Also, in a further effort to make our membership process more convenient, we are also working on a way for you to pay your dues for next year online. Stay tuned!

For now, enjoy this issue. All the best,

Rita

Eastern Chestnut Orchards Hit by 17-Year Cicada Emergence This Year

This year, "Brood V" of 17-year periodical cicadas emerged in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia.

During early summer in specific years, periodical cicadas emerge and devour deciduous trees, their preferred food source, in the midwestern and eastern United States.

Somebody, somewhere is getting hammered almost every year. (You can find informative maps and predictions online at cicadamania.com.)

Cicadas can devastate chestnuts when they emerge – they will essentially prune off two years of growth.

Cicadas are a highly predictable calamity, but unfortunately, almost nothing can be done to prevent their damage.

Greg Miller of Carrollton, Ohio reported that, "In spite of our spraying, we still suffered 80-90% crop loss. One of our co-op members has orchards 2 hours away but he had no cicada damage." He figures their co-op will have about 40% of last year's crop volume to sell. ☹

selling online in 2002. We select out all those in Oregon and Washington and send an email announcing the event. It includes a map and information on what we'll have going on. (That's free.) We let the local agricultural extension office know what we'll be doing and they spread the word. We also put a notice on the website. Notice that we haven't spent a dime to publicize the event so far.

Who shows up?

You're going to have two kinds of people show up. First are the curious. They've heard about chestnuts and can probably sing the song for you but they've never actually tasted them. They come to you thinking this is just a nut so you've got a great opportunity to provide them with some education. Part of that education is the samples you'll have available.

The second kind of person is the total chestnut lover. They can't get enough of them and detest what's available at their local market because they haven't been handled properly by the produce manager. Just remember, the worse the chestnuts are at local markets, the more your sales will increase. For those of you who wholesale your nuts to markets, we know you're providing all the information they need to keep them in good condition, but that doesn't mean they're paying attention or that they even care.

We offer free, homemade chestnut bisque (get the recipe on page 11!), hot roasted chestnuts, and have fresh chestnuts for sale as well. When they are available, we have our chestnut flour and dried chestnuts for sale and our chestnut mixes. Chestnut knives and roaster pans are also offered. The latter are almost impossible to buy in our area so customers often buy them here. We're usually in the middle of harvest so we'll have people working on the processing line that visitors like to watch, and Ray and I demonstrate sweeping and harvesting every hour or so during the day.

Managing the crowds

To manage all this takes people. We've had as many as 600 people show up in a day and even had four customers from Massachusetts show up one year. It turns out they were flight attendants from Delta and out for a weekend of chestnuts on Saturday and the Willamette Valley wineries on Sunday.

We use two people to manage parking and two people for sales. Our sales take place in the garage, which is set up like a pseudo-store. The sales folks trade off scoring and roasting the nuts so that they're freshly roasted all day. We've found that you can keep the nuts hot if you wrap them in towels and put them in an ice chest. Just be careful that they're not too close to the plastic or it will melt. We make our chestnut bisque early that morning and keep it in a commercial soup cooker to make sure it's kept at the required temperature. It's served in small sample cups the size you might see used at your local market by demonstrators.

It takes three to run the processing line, and then the two of us demonstrate sweeping and harvesting and spend the rest of our time talking with folks and answering their questions. Like many of you, we have an oceangoing refrigerated container for storing our nuts and people are in awe when we open it to let them peak inside. They're surprised when the humidifier comes on and shocked to see thousands of pounds of nuts arranged neatly on the shelves.

The one unusual thing we have that other orchards don't have is a garden maze. It's a modified version of the Hampton Court Maze outside London. Kids love it and families who've been here before often come just so their kids can investigate the maze one more time. There is no charge for this activity.

Safety concerns

Safety is important at any event and you want to make sure people are

warned not to pick up the burrs and to make sure their children don't either. If you make the mistake of referring to the burrs as "porcupine eggs", it sounds cute and just motivates kids to grab them. It's also important to make sure that you keep a safe distance between your machinery and your visitors. Yellow warning tape or something similar can be used to keep them at a safe distance yet allow them to see what the machinery is doing. It goes without saying of course that you know your liability insurance covers such an event. In some areas you may need to get a permit for your event from your county.

We set up signs at the freeway off ramp early in the morning and signs to reach our place at the required intersections. Make sure you organize your traffic flow and parking. People tend to park helter skelter if you are not decisive in your planning.

Think outside the box

Another event we tried on a separate weekend that could be combined with the festival was a visit by the local Model A clubs. When you see 30 old Model A's tootle up your road it's exciting to see. Everybody loves them. And 30 Model A's probably means 60 potential customers. Bike clubs that ride on Saturdays are another potential group of visitors. We've also had senior groups from local churches.

Your visitors are only limited by your imagination. It's important to get out of the "We've-always-done-it-this-way" mindset. Jump outside the box and see what happens.

Can we really pull this off?

And you ask yourself, "Is it really profitable?" Oh, yes – very! It's a lot of work and takes careful planning but your customers/visitors will love it and you'll have fun yourself. Your result is more local customers and more sales. It gives you credibility and lots of positive publicity. It's certainly worth trying! ☺

Continued from Page 1...

the research center for those interested in learning more about agroforestry practices.

The event connects with National Chestnut Week, and admission to the Roast is free. Most activities take place under tents for comfort rain or shine. Service animals are permitted at the roast, but pets are not allowed. The Roast is a child-friendly event. Children have plenty to keep them busy, including a “whiz bang” science show, Missouri Chestnut Roast Fact Hunt, a straw bale maze, and other unique activities that change every year.

Chestnut Roasts and the media

Getting the Center’s name out to media and to the public through news releases and events has helped to establish the Center as one of the nation’s leading institutions for agroforestry specialty crop research. The Chestnut Roast is the Center’s biggest media and public relations-related event of the year. Promoting the event is an important task and takes the form of advertising in various local papers, sending out a news release to both the media and extension agents around the state, sending out a news brief just before the event for media to use as a calendar item or event listing, creating a flyer to use at other events and tourism bureaus, crafting an e-mail to send to MU faculty and staff, posting event-related information on dozens of event and community calendars, and tailoring informational packets to local media based on the type of media and their intended audience.

The Center works hard to find a new message to focus on each year. Although most media outlets enjoy covering the event every year, it is important to give them a new “angle” each time. In addition, we encourage food writers to attend the chestnut cooking demonstration at the Roast to learn more about the versatility of chestnuts. In past years information about the Roast and the Hickman House made the AP wire. This means newspapers across the region received the article via the Associated Press and were able to run the article verbatim, or run parts of the article as suited to their audience. Over the past few years we have been very interested to see the number of local blogs that have popped up with entries about experiences at the Roast (all very positive!) This is just another form of word-of-mouth advertising that continues to grow!

The Center has also used the Roast to conduct market and consumer research.

Motivations for attending the festival

Although the Chestnut Roast Festival attracts a high proportion of first time attendees (about 75% each year), the festival is also building a group of loyal visitors. A survey in 2008 showed that there is significant motivation difference between first time and return visitors. The highest contributions in differentiating first time and return visitors in terms of motivation to attend the festival were the uniqueness of the festival (0.824), participants’ desire to lean about chestnuts (0.773), their desire to buy chestnuts (0.515), and their desire to attend festivals (0.435). Although first time visitors are motivated more than return visitors to attend the festival to learn about chestnuts, to buy chestnuts, and because they like festivals, return visitors are motivated more than first time visitors by the uniqueness of the festival.

These results have important marketing implications. Continuing to provide entertainment activities and new opportunities to learn about chestnuts and by focusing on maintaining the brand image, the festival can continue to attract new visitors and also maintain a loyal base of return visitors.

Preferences for chestnuts in Missouri

A second 2008 survey was designed to identify consumer preferences for different chestnut attributes. Results indicated that chestnuts grown in Missouri using organic

methods are the most likely to be preferred by consumers when product prices are the same. A lower level of coefficient on prices than other product attributes suggests that US-certified producers may be able to exercise premiums over prices prevalent in the market for non-certified or imported chestnuts. Several examples illustrated that even higher priced chestnuts might be preferred over lower priced products when local or national origin and production certification are disclosed. Our findings suggest that producers in Missouri should clearly identify the origin of their products and seek organic certification as two marketing tools to have a greater impact among consumers. The evidence of potential price premiums should be interpreted as an important incentive to establish new chestnut plantations.

Chestnut consumption

Research data also show the positive effect of having such an event on consumer willingness to purchase chestnuts in the future (see Figure 1).

From 2003 through 2009 we tracked participants’ frequency of consumption of chestnuts. As of 2009, 30% of respondents had never consumed chestnuts, 43% consumed them once a year or rarely and 27% consumed them more than once a year. Sixty-five percent of participants also consumed chestnuts in places other than the Chestnut Roast. Return visitors are significantly more likely to consume chestnuts more often when compared with first time visitors. ☛

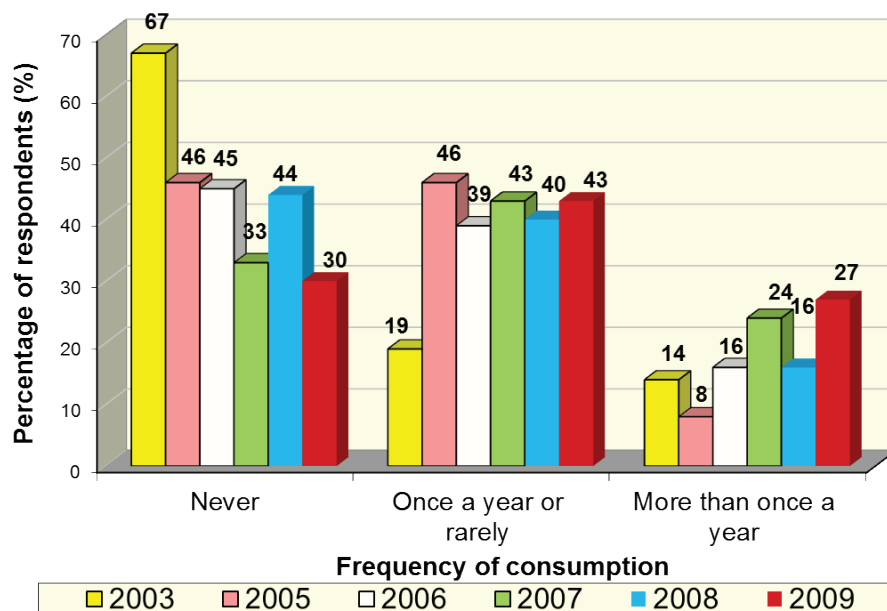


Figure 1. Frequency of chestnut consumption increased over time.

Getting the best value for your chestnuts is a matter of best practices – and knowing what NOT to do

Roger Smith of Prairie Grove Chestnut Growers (Columbus Junction, Iowa) has developed this list of best practices that he sends to the 60+ growers he purchases from every August before harvest. All chestnuts he sells are bagged and marked with a grower number to track quality problems. Following this list of 'do's and don'ts' increases your chances of being a grower sellers and customers can rely on for quality. Many thanks to Roger for submitting this helpful list. Contact Roger at Gsons3@aol.com.

HARVEST

Do

- Harvest nuts promptly, preferably the same day they drop from the tree.
- If you miss several days of harvesting, set the older dried-out nuts aside. Keep them separate from fresh nuts.

Don't

- Never leave chestnuts on the ground for more than one day in warm weather, or two days in cool/cloudy weather. They will dry out.
- Never mix dried-out and fresh nuts. Dried-out chestnuts will be dull, not shiny. Dry chestnuts may be saleable at a discount.
- Never run over chestnuts with heavy equipment. They will crack and become unsaleable.
- Never pre-harvest (pick the unopened burs off the tree). Chestnuts do not develop their marketing deep brown color until the last 24-36 hours before they fall from the burr. White chestnuts are of no value.

Tips

- Mow the grass short around your trees before the harvest begins to make the process easier.
- The harvest will generally last 3-4 weeks. A very cool fall will make for a 5-week harvest. Not all trees will drop their nuts at the same time.
- Harvest will start around the 15th-20th of September in the Midwest. Due to very hot late August temperatures in 2015, the harvest was 10 days early (which is the exception).
- Most growers harvest by hand and/or use a Nut Wizard. If you are using the Nut Wizard, the small one works best unless all your nuts are 1 1/8th inch or larger in diameter.
- Cleaning the burrs as you go will make harvesting faster, and you will also find nuts hidden in the dropped burrs. We throw our burrs to the tree trunk and then gather them at the end of the season.

POST-HARVEST STORAGE AND PROCESSING

Do

- Float chestnuts in a bucket or tub to both clean and remove anything that floats. Bad, un-pollinated (flat), or cracked nuts will float - they are of no value. You can also place nuts on a wire screen and spray the dirt off and then pick out any ruined nuts as described above.

- Cool down nuts as soon as possible. Place them in a cooler, refrigerator, root cellar, or cool basement promptly after harvest.
- Keep them from drying out. Once they are cooled, store chestnuts in mesh or perforated polyethylene bags, in a double layer of craft paper bags, or in cardboard boxes to reduce moisture loss. Chestnuts may be stored in open trays or mesh bags in high humidity, but they may need to be sprayed with water every few days.
- Use containers holding no more than 25 lbs. You can transport them in larger containers.
- Keep them safe from rodents. Everything likes them - mice, chipmunks, deer, even your dog.
- You will need to turn them every 3 days. Check for mold and spray if they are in open containers.
- Get them to the processing center promptly.

Don't

- Never leave harvested chestnuts in the sun or a warm place. They will heat up and spoil (turn black or get black tips) and lose weight.
- Never store more than 25 lbs of nuts in one container. Chestnuts are a water-based nut and need room to breathe.
- Never store chestnuts in plastic or air-tight bags. They will sweat and develop exterior mold.
- Never freeze fresh chestnuts. They will then be worthless. The nut must become spongy before you can safely freeze chestnuts for long term storage (2-10 months). This generally requires 4-6 weeks in refrigeration.
- Never hold on to your chestnuts for too long. They will lose weight and thus value.

Tips

- We bought an old refrigerator for \$10 to store our harvested chestnuts. It holds 250-300 lbs. We also clean or float for quality before refrigerating.
- When we sell chestnuts, we allow for 4% shrinkage over 3-4 days in transit. This is important because if you are not harvesting daily or properly cooling your chestnuts, the shrinkage will be even greater than that. Bottom line: you will be losing money. 100 lbs of harvested chestnuts can easily turn into 90 lbs of salable nuts, or worse, unsaleable nuts at any price. ☹

Chestnut Cooperatives: The Pros and Cons

You may want nothing to do with co-ops, you may be looking to join one, or you may want to start your own. The choice is yours – but consider the advantages and disadvantages.

There are currently four major US chestnut co-ops:

- Florida: USA Chestnut, Inc. (usachestnuts.com)
- Iowa, Illinois, and Missouri: Prairie Grove Chestnut Growers (prairiegrovechestnutgrowers.com)
- Ohio: Route 9 Cooperative (route9cooperative.com)
- Michigan: Chestnut Growers, Inc. (chestnutgrowersinc.com)

Every co-op is unique in how they operate. See the April 2015 issue of *The Chestnut Grower* for information on the unique aspects of each of these co-ops (past issues available on the members-only page of the CGA website).

Advantages

- Receive better prices: chestnuts can be sold at greater values than growers would normally receive through individual sales and marketing efforts.
- Members can utilize the same equipment for harvesting, washing, sorting, bagging, etc., rather than duplicate the same equipment, expenses, and processes on x different farms in the same area.
- Security: Selling and buying orchards is easier and less risky if there is a permanent entity whose dedicated purpose is to buy chestnuts and help growers.
- Better access to markets: a co-op has better opportunities for bulk sales to major companies.
- Because of the diversity in the group, the co-op can contract with buyers each year and maintain a customer base without fear of not having a supply of fresh chestnuts available, even if some growers have better production than others in some years.
- Joining a co-op is a good option if you are running your orchard and managing a different full-time job at the same time: members can work as much or as little as they want and get paid accordingly.
- Can be a good fit for newer growers who have not yet developed a solid market and don't want to be stuck with unsold nuts.
- Established quality standards and a standardized sizing system reduces customer confusion.
- More opportunities to turn unsold nuts into value-added products
- Barriers to becoming or remaining a chestnut grower greatly reduced
- Shared knowledge and strategizing; group bargaining power

- Name recognition
- Better position to receive grants
- Special legal privileges may be available for agricultural cooperatives
- Orchard owners usually own and maintain control of the cooperative
- Development of solid relationships and camaraderie among co-op members

Drawbacks

- Coordinator takes commission for marketing, book-keeping, and other expenses associated with running the co-op.
- Co-op may have requirements for minimum amount of chestnuts that must be marketed through the co-op.
- Less flexibility about how to sell on your own farm – may require that you sell for a price equal to or greater than the coop's price.
- Prices paid to co-op members are generally less than what you could get if you sell on your own, especially if you have a strong U-Pick audience or a solid website. In the absence of these strategies, co-ops can be a good alternative.
- Your physical location may mean there are no co-op options in your area, in which case you may want to focus on development of a strong website or U-Pick audience.
- May not get paid up front for your crop
- Quality problems from one grower reflect poorly on the whole group
- Transportation of nuts may be an issue
- Communication challenges
- Becoming profitable can be challenging
- Legal help may be needed to assist with formation of corporation
- Accountant usually needed to navigate tax rules
- May charge membership fees ☹

SAVE THE DATE!

Time to plan ahead for the 2017 annual meeting at
Greg Miller's orchard in Carrollton, Ohio:

June 9-11, 2017

Potato Leafhoppers on the Rise in Chestnut

By Erin Lizotte, Statewide IPM Educator, Michigan State University Extension · taylo548@msu.edu

Numbers were up this year for potato leafhoppers - an important pest that can cause significant damage when left unchecked.

Like many plants, chestnuts are sensitive to the saliva of potato leafhoppers that is injected while feeding. Damage to leaf tissue can cause reduced photosynthesis, which can impact production, affect nut quality, and damage the tree.

Most injury occurs on new tissue on shoot terminals with PLH feeding near the edges of the leaves using piercing-sucking mouthparts. Symptoms of feeding appear as whitish dots arranged in triangular shapes near the edges. Heavily damaged leaves are cupped with necrotic and chlorotic edges and eventually abscise from the tree (see Figure 1). Severely infested shoots produce small, bunched leaves with reduced photosynthetic capacity.

Adult leafhoppers are pale to bright green and about 1/8 inch long (see Figure 2). Adults are easily noticeable, jumping, flying, or running when agitated. The nymphs (immature leafhoppers), are pale green and have no wings

but are very similar in form to the adults. PLH move in all directions when disturbed, unlike some leafhoppers which have a distinct pattern of movement. The potato leafhopper can't survive northern winters and survives in the Gulf States until adults migrate north in the spring on storm systems.

Scouting for leafhoppers should be performed weekly as soon as leaf tissue is present to ensure early detection and prevent injury. More frequent spot checks should be done following rain storms which carry the first populations north (see Table 1; Figure 3). For every acre of orchard, select 5 trees to examine and inspect the leaves on 3 shoots per tree (a total of 15 shoots per acre).

The easiest way to observe potato leafhoppers is by flipping the shoots or leaves over and looking for adults and nymphs on the underside of leaves. Pay special attention to succulent new leaves on the terminals of branches. Growers may also hang yellow sticky traps in the

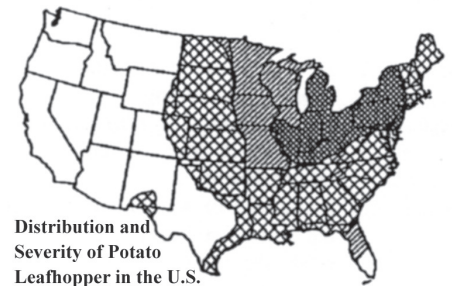


Figure 3. Distribution and severity of potato leafhopper in the U.S. Range varies depending on storm patterns season to season. Map reprinted courtesy of the North American Alfalfa Improvement Conference (NAAIC).

orchard to catch potato leafhoppers. Be sure to hang traps on the edge and interior of the block.

The most common classes of insecticides recommended for control of potato leafhoppers include the pyrethroids, carbamates, neonicotinoids and organophosphates (see Table 2 for specific recommendations, which are based on Michigan regulations. Carefully read and follow all pesticide labels to protect yourself, others and the environment. Pesticides discussed in this article may not be labeled for use in other states.) Carbamates (e.g., Carbaryl, Sevin) and organophosphates (e.g., Imidan) are broad-spectrum and can disrupt natural enemies, so only use when necessary to rotate insecticidal mode of action or to target another pest at the same time. Pyrethroids (e.g., Brigade, Baythroid, Warrior and Mustang) are also effective at controlling potato leafhoppers and remain relatively inexpensive. However, pyrethroids have been shown to cause increases in mite populations in other crops and should be used judiciously, particularly early in the season when mite populations have time to build over the season. Neonicotinoids (e.g., Admire, Nuprid, Porvado and Assail) are longer lasting and narrow spectrum, making them a solid choice for management. ☛



Figure 1. Cupped and necrotic chestnut leaves caused by potato leafhopper feeding. Photo by Erin Lizotte.

Table 1. Seasonal occurrence of potato leafhopper. This information is based on patterns in Michigan. Growth stage is highly dependent on location and annual weather fluctuations and variety.

	April	May	June	July	August	Sept.
Adults from storms		Scout carefully following spring storms for adults arriving from the Gulf				
Eggs, nymphs, and adults		First generation egg laying	Second generation eggs hatch. Eggs, nymphs, and adults may be present, treat as needed.			



Figure 2. Potato leafhopper on underside of chestnut leaf. Photo by Erin Lizotte.

Table 2. Insecticides with good or excellent efficacy against potato leafhoppers. These recommendations are based on labeled pesticides in Michigan and you will need to make sure you are able to apply them in your state. Keep in mind that pesticide labels and registrations are constantly changing. Always use the label as the final authority on proper use.

Chemical class (IRAC group)	Active ingredient	Products labeled	Efficacy Rating ¹	Beneficial Insect Toxicity ²	
				Bees	Insect Predators
				U	U
Multisite, Organophosphates(1B)	Phosmet	Imidan 70W	G-E	U	U
Carbamates(1A)	Carbaryl	Carbaryl 4L, Sevin 4F, Sevin XLR Plus, Sevin SL, Sevin 80WSP	E	T	T
Buprofezin(16)	Buprofezin	Centaur	G	S	S
METI(21A)	Fenpyroximate	Portal, Fujimite SC	G	M	M
Pyrethroids(3)	Bifenthrin**	Bifenture 10DF, Bifenture EC, Bifenture 2AG Gold, Brigade WSB, Brigade 2EC, Fanfare ES, Fanfare 2 EC, Hero EW, Sniper	G	T	T
	Beta-cyfluthrin**	Baythroid XL	E	T	T
	Zeta-cypermethrin**	Mustang, Mustang MAX, Mustang MAX EW, Mustang MAX EC, Mustang Maxx, Respect, Respect EC, Steed	G	T	T
	Fenpropathrin**	Danitol 2.4EC Spray	G	T	T
Neonicotinoids	Imidacloprid(4A)	Admire Pro, Admire 2 Flowable, Advise 2FL, Alias 4F, Amtide Imidacloprid 2F, Macho 2.0 FL, Macho 4.0, Malice 2F, Couraze 1.6F Couraze 4F, Mana Alias 4F, Montana 2F, Montana 4F, Nuprid 1.6F, Nuprid 2F, Nuprid 2SC, Nuprid 4.6F Pro, Nuprid 4F Max, Pasada 1.6F, Provado 1.6, Provado 1.6F, Provoke, Sherpa, Trimax Pro, Widow, Wrangler	G	T	M
	Thiamethoxam(4A)	Flagship 25WG ³	G	T	M
	Acetamiprid(4A)	Assail 30SG, Assail 70WP	E	M	M
	Clothianidin(4A)	Belay	E	M	M
Premixed products	Chlorantraniliprole(28) + Lambda-cyhalothrin(3)**	Voliam Xpress	G	T	T
	Flubendiamide(28) + Buprofezin(16)	Tourismo	G	S	S
	Cyfluthrin(3)** + Imidacloprid(4A)	Leverage 2.7	G	T	T

¹Pesticide efficacy ratings: E-excellent, G-good

²Beneficial insect toxicity: S-safe, M-moderate, T-toxic, U-unknown

³For use on non-bearing trees only

**Products containing these active ingredients are restricted use pesticides and require the applicator to retain a pesticide applicator license.

Information adapted from the Michigan Chestnut Management Guide 2016, available at msue.anr.msu.edu

Consider chestnuts: A potential perennial for market farms

Growing for Market Magazine Covers the basics of chestnut farming and portrays domestic chestnut production as a profitable and growing business for potential growers

The August 2016 issue of *Growing for Market – News and Ideas for Local Food Producers* – featured an article written by Eric and Joanna Reuter of Chert Hollow Farm in central Missouri, who attended the CGA annual meeting this past summer. The article is titled “Consider chestnuts: a potential perennial for market farms” and is aimed at growers who may be thinking of getting into large-scale chestnut production, or maybe just adding a few acres of chestnuts to their CSA farm.

Eric and Joanna write, “Chestnuts offer two potential avenues for market farmers: a small-scale source of side income as a specialty market/CSA product, or a larger-scale investment in a new perennial crop with a bright future. We’ve been interested in chestnuts for several years now, and hope to inspire some GFM readers to take a closer look at this unique and interesting crop.”

Eric refers to his positive experiences and what he learned at the CGA annual meeting throughout the piece. President David English was quoted talking about the advantages of co-ops, and members Tom Wahl and Kathy Dice also offered their perspective on harvesting through U-pick operations.

Eric draws on several more of his experiences and interactions at the annual meeting to paint a thoroughly convincing picture of the

benefits of getting into chestnuts. Overall, the sense he got from CGA members was that we want to work together to help each other succeed, and we want to provide advice and resources to help new growers get started on the right foot. “If anything is certain about growing chestnuts, it’s that you don’t have to go it alone,” he writes. “Every grower I talked to was excited about their crop’s future and the potential to help more farmers get started.”

The article provides specifics on orchard startup costs, expected yields, and net income. It’s a relatively short, readable, high quality breakdown of the basics.

We have permission from the *Growing for Market* editor to distribute the article in print or electronically. A copy of the article can be found on the members-only page of the CGA website (look under “General Information”), and if you are a print-only subscriber to *The Chestnut Grower*, I’ve enclosed a hard copy of the piece.

Forward the article or make a few copies and pass them along to someone who may be thinking of getting into the business. They’re sure to learn a lot! ☺

Thanks to Eric Reuter and GFM editor Andrew Mefford for allowing us to share their article.



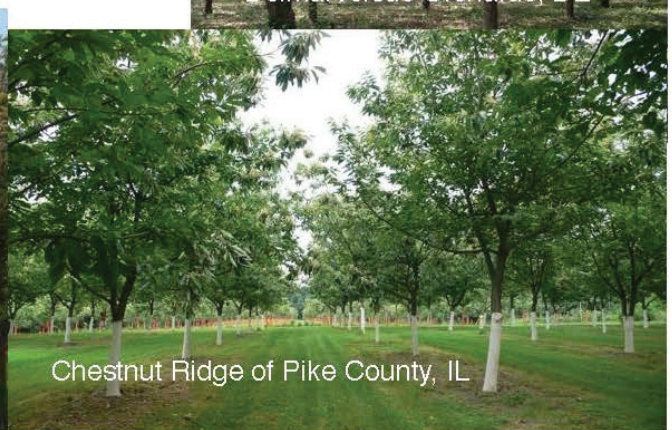
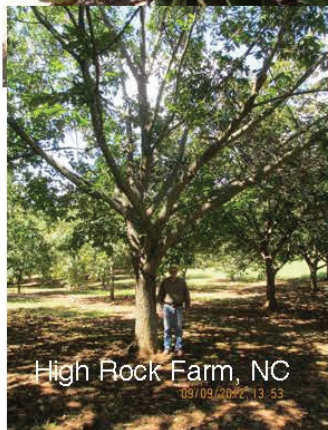
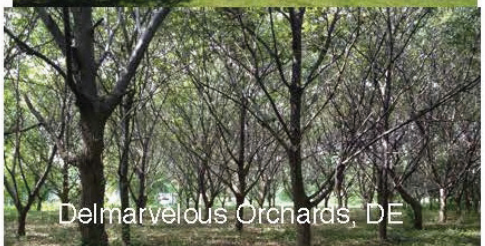
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Chestnut, Squash, and Blue Cheese Soup (Chestnut Bisque)

Serves 4; can be scaled up to serve large groups

- 8 oz chestnuts
- 1 lb butternut squash, peeled and diced
- 3 oz blue cheese, roughly chopped
- 2 C vegetable stock
- 1 small onion, finely sliced
- 2 sticks of celery, finely chopped
- 2 cloves of garlic, crushed
- 1 Tbsp honey
- 1 tsp butter
- 2 slices of pancetta
- 1 slice of bread, diced
- 2 Tbsp Rosemary leaves
- Olive oil
- Salt and pepper

Pre-heat the oven to 375°. Roast or boil the chestnuts and peel. Put your diced squash on a cookie sheet, add enough olive oil to coat each piece and drizzle with the honey. Season with salt and put on the top shelf of the oven. Cook the squash for about 30 minutes, or until the squash begins to color. Remove from the oven and allow to cool.

In a saucepan, heat a drizzle of olive oil and the butter, then add the garlic onions and celery. Sauté for about 5 minutes or until they become soft and begin to brown.

Add the peeled chestnuts to the pan, then add the squash and continue to cook for 5 minutes. Add the stock and allow to simmer for 20 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat, crumble in the blue cheese and blend the soup with a hand blender until smooth.

To top the soup, fry the pancetta in a little olive oil until crispy and cut into small pieces. In the remaining fat in the pan fry the diced bread and rosemary with a little salt until crisp. Sprinkle them over the soup just before eating with a dash of cream.

Promoting Chestnuts during National Chestnut Week -- A Few Ideas

PUBLICITY

- *Post signs in your yard or orchard for motorists to see*
- *Add an announcement to your website*
- *Participate in a community event such as a festival or fair with a booth*
- *Send your local media a press release about NCW*
- *Send your local radio station a PSA*
- *Volunteer to speak to organizations*
- *Get your local food editor to write an article about your orchard or about chestnuts*
- *Post a sign at your farmers' market booth*
- *Promote NCW on your social media channels*

HOST AN EVENT AT YOUR ORCHARD

- *Take guests on tours of the orchard*
- *Demonstrate equipment and processing*
- *Offer samples of your chestnuts and chestnut products*

- *Provide farm brochures for people to take with them*
- *Have recipes available*
- *Offer chestnut dishes for sale - cakes, cookies, soup, etc.*

OTHER FUN IDEAS TO DRAW FOLKS IN...

- *Serve a chestnut pancake breakfast*
- *Petting zoo of farm animals*
- *Corn maze*
- *Cooking contest*
- *Face painting*
- *Guess how many chestnuts in a jar contest*
- *Music - live or recorded*
- *Make up a booklet for adults and children alike with all kinds of facts, figures, and puzzles*
- *Have a storyteller for children who can tell them the story of Chestnuts*
- *Get a local winery to host a tasting at your orchard*

2016 CGA Membership Report

Individuals	47
Households	55
Associate	2
Complimentary	4
Honorary	1
Total for 2016	109

Want To Buy / For Sale

CGA members can post equipment or other items they want to buy or have for sale, free. Send your submissions to the editor.

YOUR AD HERE

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Washington Chestnut Company

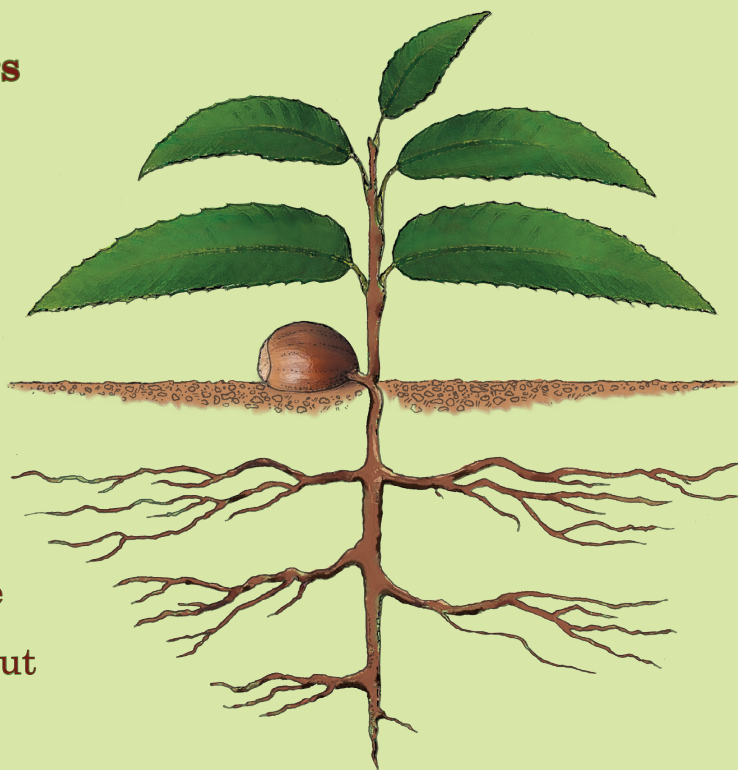


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Our web site has full descriptions of each cultivar and lots of help with growing chestnut trees.

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