



A Hard Nut to Crack: Identifying Factors Relevant to U.S. Chestnut Consumption

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Thanks in large part to exhaustive research efforts identifying improved chestnut cultivars², the chestnut industry has undergone a rapid resurgence over the past few decades. These production gains coincided with a growing consumer interest in healthy and alternative foods³, creating conditions to support a growing U.S. chestnut market. Indeed, American consumption lags behind the average European consumer⁴, who eats 1 lb (0.5 kg) of chestnuts each year and the average Chinese, Japanese, or Korean consumer who eats 5.7 lb (2.5 kg) each

year. Furthermore, from 2007 to 2015, the average annual growth rates⁵ of chestnut consumption in many European countries including Italy reached over 6.0% per year. Despite this popularity overseas, the average American consumes a mere 0.10 lb (0.05 kg) per year.

Chestnuts are popular worldwide⁶, but they are not still commonly purchased in the United States. Currently, most chestnuts in the United States are imported from Italy and, to a lesser extent, from Asia. This unbalanced trade relationship is poised to change, as U.S. growers now primarily cultivate Chinese and Japanese-European hybrids, which have many superior production qualities, including reduced susceptibility to *C. parasitica*⁷.

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THE CHESTNUT GROWER

Spring 2021

About Chestnut Growers of America, Inc.

The purpose of Chestnut Growers of America 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.

CGA began as the Western Chestnut Growers in 1996 in Oregon where about 30 or so chestnut growers understood the need to join forces to promote chestnuts in the U.S. Eventually they realized that they needed to be a national organization and solicited memberships from every grower in the country, which took the membership to over 100. The name of the organization was changed to Chestnut Growers of America, Inc., and it was granted 501(c)(5) status. Annual meetings take place around the country in an effort to make it possible for a maximum number of people to attend. A newsletter, *The Chestnut Grower*, is published quarterly and distributed by mail and/or email. CGA maintains an extensive resource site available only to members containing information helpful in growing and marketing. Visit chestnutgrowers.org for more information.

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Annual Membership Dues

Single membership, \$45; Household membership, \$55; Associate membership, \$60. Members receive *The Chestnut Grower* quarterly. Emailed newsletters are included. Mailed newsletters are an additional \$5 per year. A \$10 late fee is applied to membership renewals submitted after April 1.

Advertising Rates

Full page, camera ready	\$20.00
Half page, camera ready	\$15.00
Quarter page	\$10.00
Business card (4 issues)	\$15.00
Classifieds	FREE

Email ads to chestnutgrowersofamerica@gmail.com. Send payment for ads to Jack Kirk, 2300 Bryan Park Av., Richmond, VA 23228. Make checks payable to Chestnut Growers of America, Inc. OR visit www.chestnutgrowers.org/paydues.html to submit payment online via PayPal.

Editorial Opinion

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Message from CGA President Roger Blackwell, Chestnut Grower



Happy Springtime! I know it is April already and Spring has sprung. This newsletter again will include some great articles as well as the agenda for the Annual Membership Zoom Meeting which will require no travel this year, but some great information for all. Hopefully, next year in 2022 we will again

meet in person. And finally, our slate of Officers is now complete for the 2021/2022 year and is presented in this newsletter. One of our Directors, Derek Waltchack, has stepped down from the CGA Board. Derek has been a Director for several years, and CGA has appreciated his work as a member of CGA.

CGA's Annual Zoom Meeting will be held on Monday June 7th, 2021 at 12noon to 2:00pm Eastern Daylight Savings time and Tuesday June 8th, 2021 from 12 noon to 2:00pm Eastern Daylight Savings time. A complete program agenda is in this newsletter. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend this very educational meeting. Please register by May 20, 2021 so we can have good count on how many members will be attending these two Zoom meetings.

Here is a brief overview of the planned meeting for the two-day sessions. On Monday June 7th we will have thirty-minute Business Meeting. Next, the Annual Chestnut Marketing Survey will be presented by Dr. Michael Gold with discussions on marketing chestnuts. On Tuesday June 8th, we will have two guest speakers on Chestnut Topics: Dr. Ron Revord will present on The Chestnut Breeding Program at the University of Missouri. The next presentation will be from Dr. Guido Bassi, Agronomist, "Chestnut Cultivation Handbook" from Italy. When you register you will receive the information to connect to Zoom Meeting prior to the dates.

During this year one of our members passed, Flavio R. Alfaro, who will be greatly missed. Our condolences go out to his wife Suzanne Alfaro and his family. A memorial notice is included in this newsletter.

Finally, as you read this enclosed issue, please consider inviting other non-member chestnut grower friends you might know to attend our Annual Zoom Meeting this year.

Best regards,



Roger

Four Things I've Learned About Chestnuts (So Far)

By Trey Malone, Assistant Professor and Extension Economist, Department of Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics, Michigan State University

When I moved to Michigan from Kansas, I knew the agriculture would be different...and Michigan has delivered. The climate, the soils, and the people have all proved to be a different breed when compared to my home state. In the past year, I've had discussions with growers involved in tart cherries, cider apples, hops, soybeans, and more. But here, I'd like to talk about chestnuts. This is the crop that is probably the furthest outside of my knowledge base – prior to this year, I'd never even eaten a chestnut! The learning curve has been extremely drastic, but here are four things I've learned about this crop.

1: Chestnut trees can be extremely difficult to grow.

A couple years ago, I had the opportunity to attend the Midwest Chestnut Producers Council (MCPC) annual farm tour. They hosted the event at a new orchard outside Ravenna, MI, where the grower talked about the difficulties he had over the past couple years. While I'm no agronomist (I'm hardly a gardener), his discussion of the trials and tribulations associated



Chestnut saplings on the MCPC farm tour.

with establishing his 10-acre orchard was eye-opening. Although an established orchard can thrive for decades (if not centuries), planting the trees requires many considerations as **the gap between planting and nut production is generally five to ten years!**

In the orchard we toured, the grower had dug his holes slightly too deep, which prevented adequate oxygen from reaching the roots, killing more than half of his saplings. Annual weather patterns also influence the livelihood of chestnut saplings and mature trees. That year was particularly challenging for Michigan growers because the fall season was wetter and milder than usual. This caused the trees to ramp down production more slowly and enter dormancy late, leaving the trees vulnerable to freezing winter temperatures. Despite the warmer fall temperatures, the winter temperatures plummeted near the danger zone for the chestnut trees' hardiness (approx. -20 degrees Fahrenheit) a few times. To make matters worse, the orchard was surrounded by large trees on all sides, which trapped cold air in the winter and contributed to the demise of his saplings.

2: The average American consumer knows shockingly little about chestnuts.

When I was asked to present something to the MCPC back in Spring 2018, the first thing I did was to go to the Food Demand

Continued on page 7...

Mark Your Calendars!

For the Chestnut Growers of America 2021 Annual Meeting to be held via Zoom

June 7 - 8, 2021

12:00noon - 2:00pm EDT both days

SHARE: Catch up with fellow growers and share tips and resources.

LEARN: Hear presentations from industry experts.

PARTICIPATE: Vote on CGA business and share your ideas to grow our organization.

Find complete program and registration information on page 11.

2021 - 2022 CGA Slate of Officers:

President: Roger Blackwell

Vice President: Position currently vacant

Secretary/Treasurer: Jack Kirk

Directors: Sara Fitzsimmons, Steve Jones, Greg Miller, Tom Wahl, Luke Wilson

According to the bylaws, the slate shall be considered to have been elected unanimously if no written petitions are received.

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Additionally, U.S. chestnut growers can provide freshly harvested local chestnuts with lower transportation costs.

To assess this market opportunity, growers would benefit from understanding⁸ key characteristics of chestnut consumers. Prior studies of chestnut consumption have found that quality, freshness, production region, and nutrition are important features for consumer demand. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln (2002) study indicates that freshness and quality are extremely important⁹ for upscale restaurant chefs in choosing chestnut products. Similarly, chefs prefer peeled to unpeeled chestnuts and use them in a variety of dishes¹⁰.

Gold et al. (2004) assessed consumer preferences among attendees at the Missouri Chestnut Roast and found that nutrition/diet/health, quality, and local production influence purchase and consumption decisions for chestnut consumers. Gold et al. (2004b)¹¹ and Gold, Cernusca, and Godsey (2005)¹² also reported that U.S. consumers prefer buying chestnuts from grocery stores or farmers' markets and that organic and chestnut cultivar labeling can help capture price premiums. Aguilar, Cernusca, and Gold (2009)¹³ reanalyzed survey data from Missouri Chestnut Roasts and found that festival participants ranked product quality, local production, and nutritional

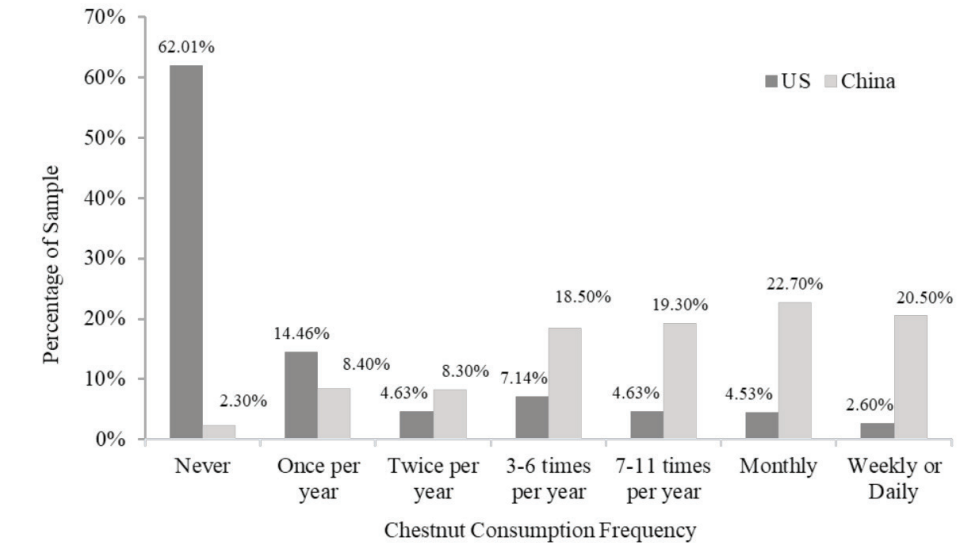


Figure 1. Chinese and U.S. Chestnut Consumption Frequency.

value as the most important attributes. Size also matters, as festivalgoers showed more interest in medium-sized chestnuts.

Consumers are willing to pay a premium if the product is “local”,¹⁴ so it follows that production regions are likely to have a relationship with demand. It is likely that food choices have always been influenced by consumers’ culture, which often leads to the development of local food identities¹⁵. Future studies might consider popular foods with ethnic heritages, including edamame, quinoa, or asiago cheese. That is, understanding how cultural identity influences ethnic food choice is likely to be an important next step for interpreting best practices

for marketing strategies for chestnuts *as well as* other foods with a cultural heritage.

To identify U.S. chestnut consumption, we evaluated responses on the Food Demand Survey (FoodS)¹⁶, an online survey that was conducted monthly to track consumer preferences and sentiments on food safety, quality, and price. The survey also collected consumers’ demographic information, including gender, age, education, income, marital status, and ethnicity. The July 2017 survey asked participants to identify the frequency with which they consumed an assortment of nuts, including chestnuts, using a Likert scale. In total, 1,034 U.S. consumers completed the survey.

Figure 1 displays the frequency distribution of chestnut consumption from the FoodS survey in the United States and a similar survey conducted in China. While almost every Chinese consumer (97.7%) had eaten a chestnut in the past year, fewer than half of U.S. consumers had ever tried a chestnut. The average U.S. consumer in our sample ate chestnuts about twice per year, while Chinese consumers ate chestnuts monthly.

Differences in U.S. and Chinese consumers were key to this study. Figure 2 illustrates the frequency of chestnut consumption by province in China. On average, consumers in southeastern coastal areas and the provinces around Beijing, the capital of China, consume more chestnuts.



Roasting chestnuts at the annual Missouri Chestnut Roast festival. Photo courtesy of Logan Jackson, University of Missouri.

Figure 3 displays chestnut production data for each province from the China Agricultural Database (2014). As the largest country in terms of chestnut production, chestnuts are grown in over 90% of Chinese provinces.

Looking at the correlation between chestnut production and consumption in the Chinese provinces, our results suggest that, at least in China, chestnut consumption is positively correlated with chestnut production; consumers who live in provinces with higher yearly

chestnut outputs consume chestnuts more frequently.

Figure 4 (see next page) displays average state-level per capita U.S. chestnut consumption drawn from FoodS survey data. States near the coast are more likely to consume chestnuts.

Currently, chestnuts are not grown everywhere in the United States. Figure 5 (see next page) displays U.S. Department of Agriculture data on chestnut production in 2012. Few states

actually produced chestnuts in 2012, as most chestnuts in the United States are imported.

One key question is whether the positive relationship between production and consumption seen in China also exists in the United States. We found no significant correlation between chestnut consumption and production in the United States. This is interesting, as prior research suggests that local production is a critical component of chestnut demand.

This shows that geography has different effects on chestnut consumption in the United States and in China. This is most likely the result of the relatively low domestic production of chestnuts in the United States since most chestnuts in the U.S. market are imported. These results also provide evidence that chestnut producers might benefit from targeting markets outside their local region.

We found that younger consumers are more likely to consume chestnuts regularly. In addition, the data suggest that male participants are more likely to eat chestnuts. Further, more educated participants are more likely to consume chestnuts. Our data also suggest that there is no relationship between participants who have children and chestnut consumption.

Many questions are worth exploring in future research about chestnut consumers. First, this study utilized consumption data reported via survey methods. Future work might benefit from considering scanner-level data in its analysis, which might help answer questions about how chestnut consumers classify chestnuts. Chestnuts are generally lower in protein than most nuts but higher in carbohydrates, potassium, and vitamin C. As such, the nutrient content of chestnuts is perhaps more comparable to a banana than to other tree nuts. Future studies might explore whether consumers actually substitute from chestnuts to other nuts or are more likely to substitute from chestnuts to fruits and vegetables with similar nutritional profiles.

Relatedly, our study did not include prices, which are likely important when consumers make decisions about

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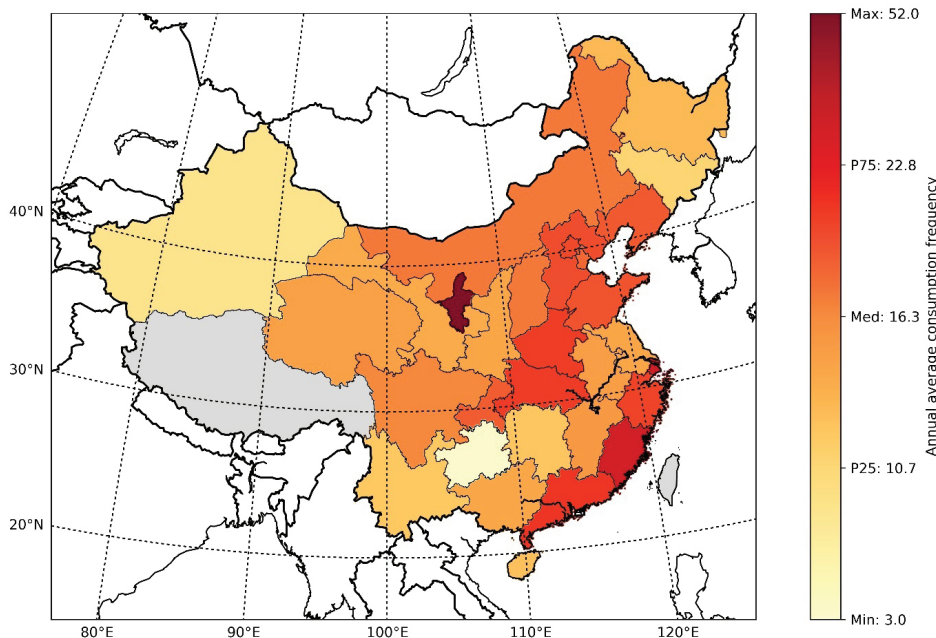


Figure 2. Chinese Chestnut Consumption, 2017. Darker color reflects higher average chestnut consumption. Grey indicates provinces without observations.

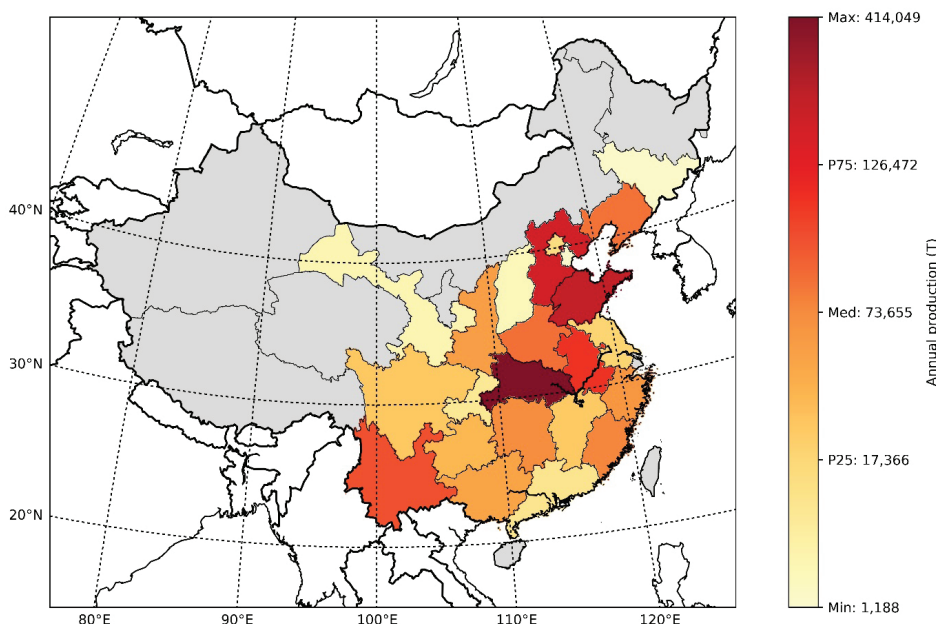


Figure 3. Chinese Chestnut Production, 2014. Darker color reflects higher average chestnut production. Grey indicates provinces without production data.

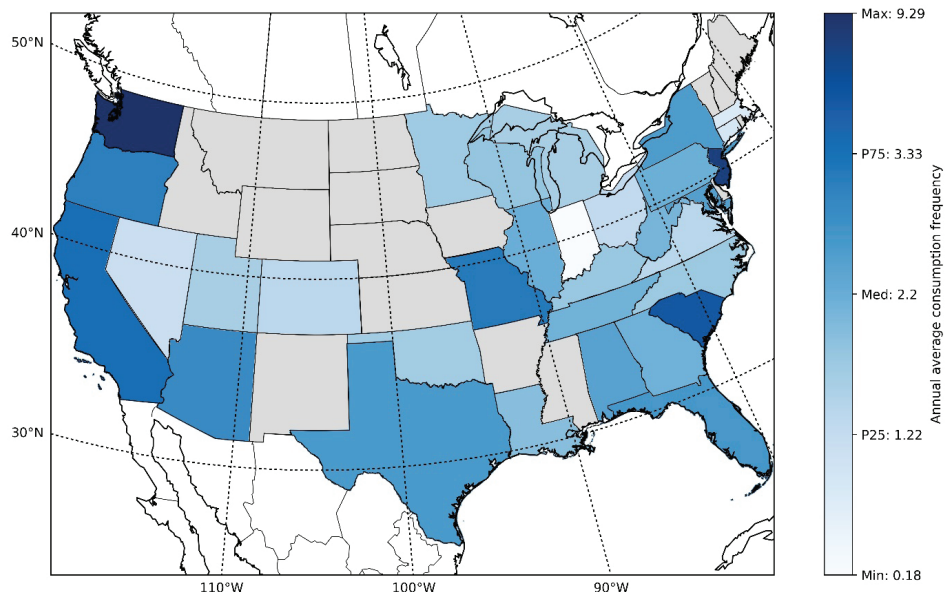


Figure 4. U.S. Chestnut Consumption, 2017. Darker color reflects higher average chestnut consumption per capita. Grey indicates states with fewer than 10 observations while white indicates low average chestnut consumption per capita.

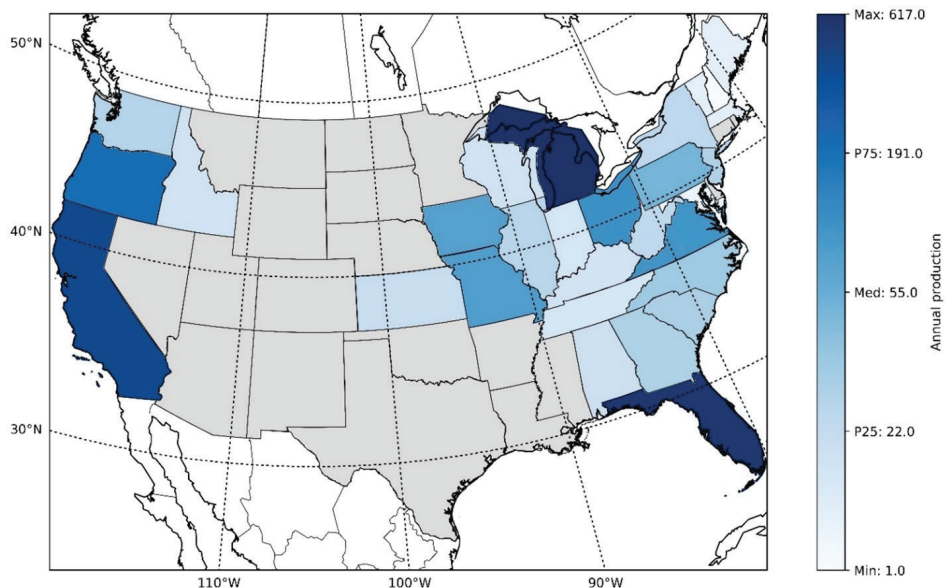


Figure 5. U.S. Chestnut Production, 2012. Note: Darker color reflects higher average chestnut production. Grey indicates states with no production data. Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture (2012)¹⁷.

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substituting between chestnuts and other, similar products. Finally, we proxied immigrant food culture with participant ethnicity. Future work might reveal stronger correlations between culture and chestnut consumption if a more refined measure of immigrant food culture were utilized.

That said, our study suggests that immigration and food culture matters; we found that Asian or Latino participants are more likely to frequently consume chestnuts than Caucasian

consumers. This conclusion could be possibly explained by the fact that chestnuts are popular in Asian and Hispanic/Latino/Spanish food cultures.

Our study also has some key implications for chestnut marketing. Rather than chasing immigrant populations as an avenue for real market growth, chestnut marketers might benefit by focusing on younger, more educated consumers. ●

¹Link to original article: https://www.fdrsinc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/JFDR_50.2_2_Malone.pdf

²<https://journals.ashs.org/horttech/view/journals/horttech/16/2/article-p360.xml>

³<https://journals.ashs.org/horttech/view/journals/horttech/14/4/article-p583.xml>

⁴<https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=G95hgSRYy9kC&oi=fnd&pg=PA1&ots=pdEzNEfW0k&sig=3rULQvifPivS8NrBSkrkTQavQMI>

⁵<https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20171130006073/en/World-Chestnut-Market-Report-2017---Analysis-And-Forecast-To-2025---Research-and-Markets>

⁶http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#rankings/countries_by_commodity

⁷<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00275514.1987.12025367?journalCode=umyc20>

⁸<http://www.centerforagroforestry.org/pubs/whychestnuts.pdf>

⁹<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/fpreports/2/>

¹⁰<https://pennstate.pure.elsevier.com/en/publications/chefs-perceptions-and-uses-of-colossal-chestnuts>

¹¹https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-94-017-2424-1_26

¹²<https://journals.ashs.org/downloadpdf/journals/horttech/15/4/article-p904.pdf>

¹³<https://journals.ashs.org/horttech/view/journals/horttech/19/1/article-p216.xml>

¹⁴<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0215847>

¹⁵<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/agricultural-and-resource-economics-review/article/role-of-collective-food-identity-in-local-food-demand/563A544041EB3DCFADED533CD73C3BA>

¹⁶<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1093/ajae/aaw110>

¹⁷<https://quickstats.nass.usda.gov/>

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Survey¹ to see if any consumer data had been collected in the recent past. To my delight, Bailey Norwood had recently sent a survey out to 1,022 U.S. consumers. *More than 60% of U.S. consumers could not recall ever trying a chestnut!* Almost half (14.5%) of those Americans who had tried a chestnut had only consumed one in the last year.

As one might expect, the consumers who eat chestnuts at least once per year were more likely to be vegetarian. This is likely good news for chestnut demand, as an increasing percentage of Americans are interested in plant-based proteins. In fact, a recent Nielsen survey² found that 39% of Americans are actively trying to eat more plant-based foods. Even the big players in animal-based proteins are investing in non-meat alternatives.

Chestnut consumers in the United States are also more likely to be younger. If I break the sample of 1,022 U.S. consumers down by age category, we see that the majority of 18-34-year-olds in the sample had in fact tried chestnuts in the past year. This is grounds for optimism, as chestnuts require a relatively large amount of knowledge to prepare properly (Search YouTube for “exploding chestnuts” and you’ll see why). The fact that consumers are being exposed to chestnuts at a younger age is great because they will hold that preparation knowledge with them throughout their lives.

3: Growth in U.S. consumer demand for chestnuts is likely to track immigration patterns.

Bailey surprised me again, as he had just recently surveyed 1,000 Chinese consumers to compare nut preferences across the United States and China. The results shocked me. Where more than half of Americans hadn’t tried a chestnut,

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Figure 1. Frequency of chestnut consumption. Source: Food Demand Survey, N=1,022

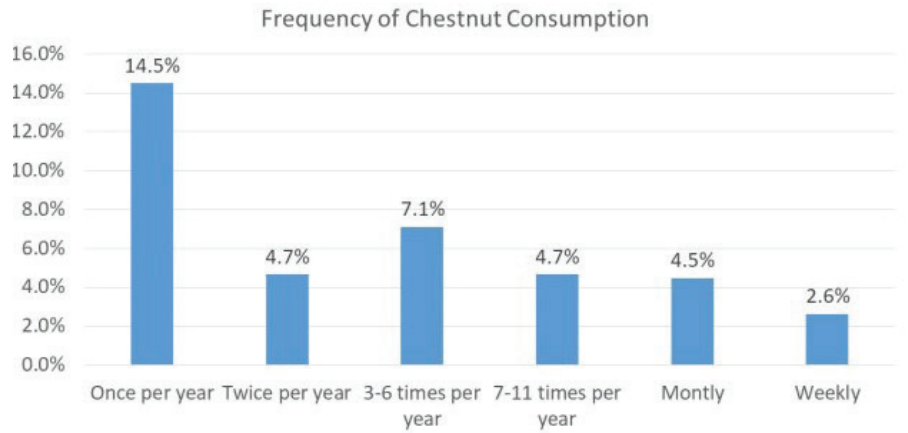


Figure 2. Consumption of chestnuts among vegetarians and non-vegetarians. Source: Food Demand Survey, N=1,022

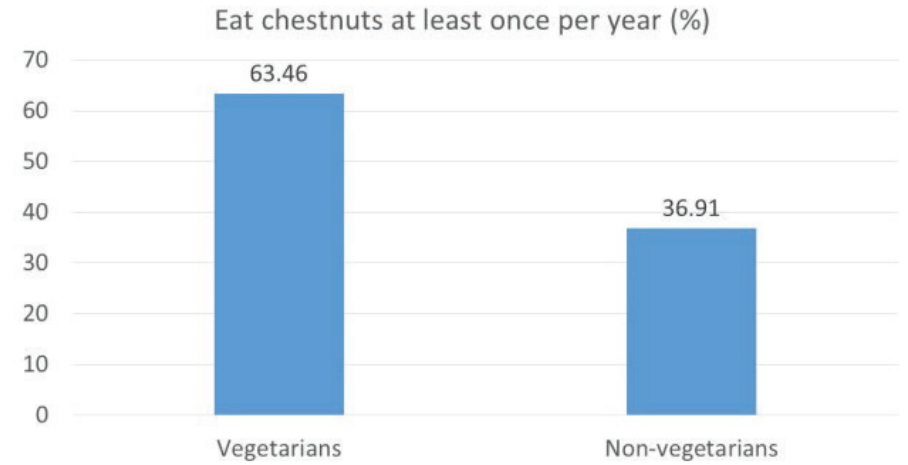


Figure 3. Consumption of chestnuts among various age groups. Source: Food Demand Survey, N=1,022

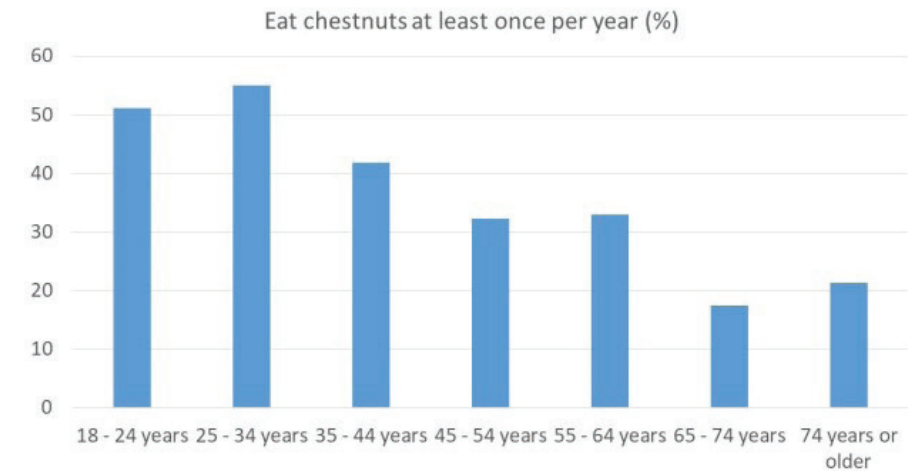
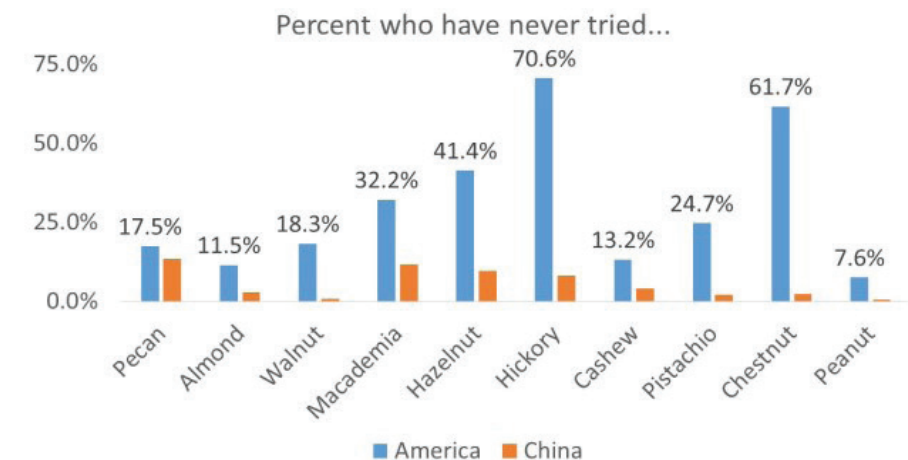


Figure 4. Comparisons among American and Chinese consumers. Source: Food Demand Survey and Bailey Norwood, PhD.





Chestnut Growers at the MCPC annual farm tour.

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almost every single Chinese consumer (97%) was extremely familiar with the product.

This is an optimistic fact for the burgeoning chestnut industry, because despite the current rhetoric, immigrants contribute substantially to the growth and vibrancy of the cities they live in. As such, chestnut marketers might be best off targeting the cities that are most welcoming to immigrants. In the future, I'd like to survey certain cities in the U.S. to compare chestnut demand for different immigrant communities. I don't really know how that data might shake out, but I think it would be an interesting exercise to see the different ways these communities incorporate chestnuts into their diets.

4: Chestnut growers are incredibly proactive, resilient, and entrepreneurial.

Probably my biggest takeaway from the Michigan chestnut growers so far is their dedication to promoting the industry. I've attended two meetings thus far and was very impressed by the passion of the group's leadership. These people are willing to do whatever it takes to grow the chestnut industry! As is often the case in agriculture, they've had "up" years and "down" years, and while that variability might push other growers

apart, it seems clear to me that it actually brought the leadership of the chestnut industry together.

As an example, consider their marketing strategy from a few years back. In an effort to promote chestnuts as a high-end product, they applied for a USDA grant to pay high-end Michigan chefs to try Michigan chestnuts in a new recipe. The buzz generated enough interest from chefs across the country that Martha Stewart even proposed a recipe. This strategy tracks Malcolm Gladwell's

book *The Tipping Point* extremely well. The marketing strategy is connected to the idea of a "maven", which is Yiddish for "one who accumulates knowledge." (Gladwell, pg. 60). They're the influencers. These are the people the rest of us look toward in an effort to get the best prices, try the best products, and prepare the most delicious meals. By targeting the *influencers*, the MCPC simultaneously targeted the population of amateur chefs and foodies who are *connected* to the influencers.

Though currently understudied, the effects of this innovative marketing strategy can still be observed in a few random places across the state. For example, while having dinner at Hermann's European Café in Cadillac, Michigan, hanging above the entrance was an article from the *Chicago Tribune* titled, "GOOD EATING: Return of the chestnut."

One worthwhile project I'd love to see conducted is an "event study" on the effect of this marketing strategy on chestnut prices. This would be methodologically similar to McKenzie and Thomsen's 2001 *Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics* paper on the effect of *E. Coli* 0157:H7 on beef prices³, but of course the evaluation would be focused on the success (or failure) of a marketing strategy.



The unappetizing package my chestnuts came in from Amazon.

Moving Forward

Thus far, I see nothing but room for optimism regarding chestnut demand – especially when I look at the competition. Out of curiosity, I got on Amazon and ordered a package of organic chestnuts from Spain. If I were to describe the packaging, “unappetizing” would be putting it lightly. The vacuum-sealed chestnuts were exceedingly squishy, the smell seemed off, and the shiny plastic covering the chestnuts did not appear too alluring. Chestnut growers have a clear comparative advantage over these competitors, as they can sell *fresh* chestnuts – which are far more

appetizing than this hyper-processed alternative. Prior research suggests fresh chestnuts are likely best marketed via institutional buyers such as restaurants “in order to create a positive experience for consumers that should lead to an increased interest in consuming chestnuts.” (Gold, Cernusca, and Godsey, 2004; pp. 588).

In terms of future marketing research related to chestnuts, the published papers I’ve been able to find are somewhat dated. For example, Gold, Cernusca, and Godsey collected survey data from 232 participants at the 2003 Missouri Chestnut Roast. Their work, published in

HortTechnology in 2004, suggested that consumers at this roast considered the locally grown nature of chestnuts to be the most important attribute. *Even at the Missouri Chestnut Roast, more than 60% of attendees had never tried a chestnut before that day.*

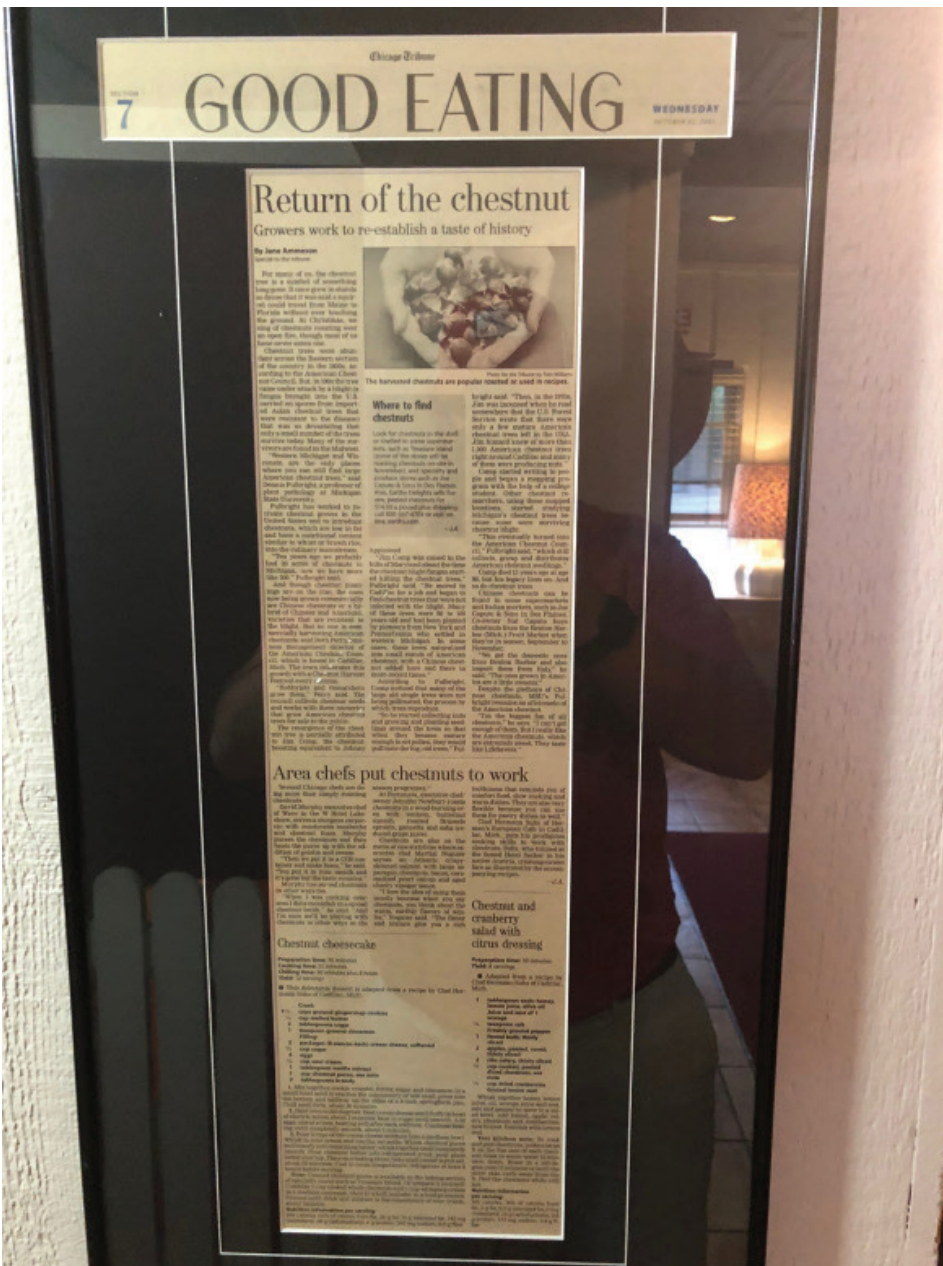
That study was followed up via the use of conjoint analysis (read: discrete choice experiment) in 2007 at the same festival. The surveyed sample was significantly more likely to have tried a chestnut, as only 34% had never tried a chestnut this time. Their findings, published in HortTechnology in 2009 (n=104), suggest that the festival participants again valued the “localness” of the product they were consuming, and that price was the least important attribute. I would like to revisit this study for a number of reasons. First, the study is over a decade old, and consumer preferences are likely to have even changed. Second, it is unlikely that the festival participants are representative of the chestnut consumers more generally. Third, I am skeptical of the (relatively) small price coefficient and believe that consumers at a local food festival are likely to overstate their willingness to pay for local foods. I’d like to re-run this hypothetical experiment with different attributes and focus on a representative sample of U.S. consumers. Then I’d like to conduct non-hypothetical choice experiments on a stratified sample of urban consumers – perhaps at farmers markets or at a sensory lab. 🍂

A version of this article was originally published by Michigan State University College of Agriculture and Natural Resources on their website on September 12, 2018.

¹<https://academic.oup.com/ajae/article-abstract/99/2/303/3059836?redirectedFrom=fulltext>

²<http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/news/2018/plant-based-food-options-are-sprouting-growth-for-retailers.html>

³<https://www.jstor.org/stable/40987119>



The article that greets you at Hermann’s in Cadillac, MI.

MEMORIAL NOTICE

Flavio R. Alfaro

Flavio R. Alfaro, 59, of Sacramento CA, a local chestnut farmer, former Marine and U.S. Olympic baseball player passed away January 27, 2021 at home with his wife after a short battle with pancreatic cancer.

"Flav" attacked life with uncompromising zeal, humor and generosity. For Flav, each day was a celebration to be enjoyed with his wife, family and numerous friends from across his life's journey.

That journey began in the Pacoima area of Los Angeles, where his baseball speed and glove skills began to emerge at Polytechnic High School. After service in the United States Marine Corps, he returned to playing baseball at College of the Canyons and then for San Diego State University Aztecs.

He was then given the honor of a lifetime when he was selected as a member of the United States' first national Olympic baseball team in 1984. Flav played middle infield and travelled the country with many future Major League Baseball All Stars. The team played in the Olympics' demonstration baseball tournament during the 1984 Summer Olympics in Flav's hometown of Los Angeles, earning a silver medals.

Flav was the 99th overall pick in the 1984 Major League Baseball First-Year Draft and played for several minor league teams, including the Durham Bulls. He was extremely humble about his baseball career, joking that it was over "once they put a wooden bat in my hand." When asked about his time playing baseball, he preferred to tell stories of the fun he had, the friends he made and the lessons he learned -- never about any personal achievement.

After his baseball career, Flav worked in the recycling business and moved to Sacramento, where he met the love of his life, Suzanne. "Suz" would be at his side for nearly 30 years. Along the way, Flav recommitted to earning his college degree and received a Bachelor of Science in Business Information Management Systems from California State University Sacramento.

Flav's passion was spending time with friends and



family. The home he and Suz made was full of warmth, laughter, great food and wine. Their door was always open. He loved exercise, movies, music, books and sports. He loved to travel with his wife to wine country. He loved playing golf, poker and fantasy sports with his friends.

Flav was an accomplished storyteller. During countless leisurely times with friends and family, his tales and his long list of Flav-isms to describe everyday life would leave anyone crying in laughter. He enriched many young lives who all knew him for his "power hugs." He cherished the title of "uncle" and "tio." And he had a deep love for animals. He spent much of his time caring for his cats and dog, Lily "The Hammer".

Most recently, Flav managed Harrison's California Chestnut Farm in Gridley, owned by his mother-in-law Sandy and late father-in-law Paul Harrison. There too, Flav, Suz, Sandy, his sister-in-law Anastasia and brother-in-law Kevin ensured the farm was a place for family and friends to enjoy cookouts, and for children to hunt for Easter eggs, ride on tractors and drive golf carts.

Flav was a larger-than-life figure and his enormous positive and joyful presence will live on in spirit. His life will serve as an inspiration to his extended family and to young scholar athletes.

Flavio is survived by his beloved wife Suzanne (Harrison) Alfaro of Sacramento; parents Luis and Teresa; brothers Manuel, Jaime and Ramon, and sister Irma Roman of Pacoima; mother-in-law Sandy Harrison of Gridley, sister-in-law Anastasia (Harrison) Murphy and her husband Kevin of Elk Grove; nephews Marcus, Manuel, Oscar and Michael; and nieces Shaney, Marissa, Selina, Shealyn, Maggie and many grand nieces and nephews, uncles, aunts and cousins. He is preceded in death by his father-in-law Paul Harrison; two dogs Chewy and Cleo.

Flavio was laid to rest at the Biggs Cemetery in Gridley, CA. A celebration of life to include his extended family and friends will be held in the future, when it is safe to do so.

Donations can be made to the Flavio Alfaro Memorial Scholarship Fund, 1017 L St #794, Sacramento CA 95814.



Have you renewed your CGA membership?

Your 2021 membership dues are now past due. For members who have not yet renewed, you have two options:

Renew Online

Download a fillable form from the CGA website at www.chestnutgrowers.org/CGA_Membership_Application_fillable.pdf. The form has also been sent out to all members via email. Complete the form and email it to Jack Kirk, CGA secretary/treasurer, at jackschestnuts@gmail.com. You can then pay your dues through the CGA website by visiting www.chestnutgrowers.org/paydues.html. Please make sure you submit both your renewal application and payment at the same time!

~OR~

Renew by Mail

Fill out, detach, and return the membership renewal form included in the Winter 2021 issue. Send the form with a check made payable to Chestnut Growers of America, Inc. to Jack Kirk, 2300 Bryan Park Ave., Richmond, VA 23228.

Please note - If you are a new member who joined after August 1, 2020, your dues are already paid for 2021. The \$10 late fee has been applied to renewals submitted after April 1.

Give your marketing a boost with a paid Chestnut Growers of America website Grower Directory listing

The online Grower Directory (www.chestnutgrowers.org/growers.html) provides a way for potential customers to look up chestnut growers in their area. An option to post a paid listing helps your orchard stand out with a photo and more detailed information. From the listing, customers can link directly to your website or contact you via email. Your renewal form includes the option for you to select a paid listing (still \$25.00/year) or a free listing. CGA regularly directs outside inquiries about local chestnuts to the online directory, so this is a marketing opportunity you can't afford to miss!



2021 Virtual Annual Membership Meeting Agenda

June 7-8, 2021 *via Zoom*

12noon-2:00pm Eastern Daylight Savings Time both days

Monday, June 7, 2021

12noon-12:10pm EDT	Welcome and Introductions
12:10pm-12:45pm EDT	Business Meeting chaired by President Roger Blackwell
12:45pm-1:50pm EDT	Chestnut Marketing Survey Results presented by Dr. Mike Gold, University of Missouri
1:50pm-2:00pm EDT	Q&A and closing for the day

Tuesday, June 8, 2021

12noon-12:05pm EDT	Welcome and Introductions
12:05pm-12:55pm EDT	The Chestnut Breeding Program at University of Missouri presented by Dr. Ron Revord
12:55pm-1:00pm EDT	Q&A Discussion
1:00pm-1:55pm EDT	"Chestnut Cultivation Handbook" presented by Dr Guido Bassi, Agronomist from Italy
1:55pm-2:00pm EDT	Q&A Discussion and Closing

Register in advance for this meeting to get the Zoom link:

[https://psu.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJcrf-urrTIjEtQqQ98bP3TyTF2UTnz-hKT6](https://psu.zoom.us/j/9876543210)

The same Zoom link will be used both days. Remember to adjust for the time difference based on your location.

Questions? Contact Roger Blackwell, CGA President (rblackwel@comcast.net) and Sara Fitzsimmons (sff3@psu.edu).



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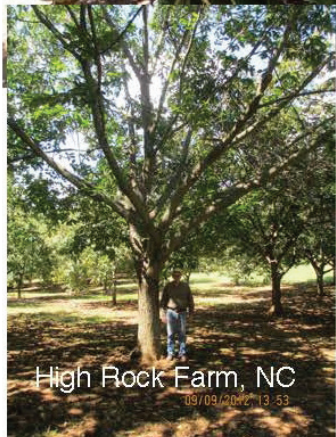
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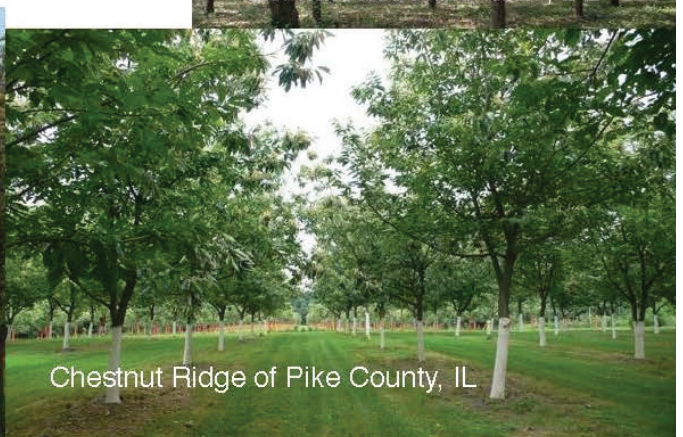
Wilson Orchards, VA



Delmarvelous Orchards, DE



High Rock Farm, NC



Chestnut Ridge of Pike County, IL