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Repopulating the American chestnut tree



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Village Times Herald
April 27, 2011 | 03:19 PM

Following a devastating nationwide blight, very few American chestnut trees remained on Long Island by the 1950s. It is a problem the fifth-grade students in Brigit DiPrimo's class at Arrowhead Elementary School are working to correct. Since early winter, the class worked to germinate 20 blight-resistant American chestnut seeds donated by The American Chestnut Foundation.

After the seeds were sown in calcium-free soil, four saplings grew in a pop-up greenhouse at the school. In celebration of Earth Day, the class planted the saplings in the school's courtyard. Once fully grown, the trees could stand as tall as 60 feet or more and are expected to begin producing chestnuts in three years or so.

For this initiative, the class was named a New York State runner-up in the Disney Planet Challenge.

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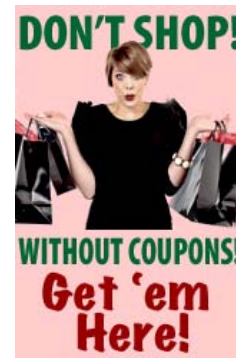
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