



THE
AMERICAN
CHESTNUT
FOUNDATION®

Riverbanks Zoo residents to host dedication of historic American chestnut tree
April 22, 2009

Columbia, SC, April 20, 2009 Residents of the Riverbanks Zoo and Garden will host the dedication of one of the most historic trees in the United States – the American chestnut on Tuesday, April 21. The tree was donated by The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF), the leading organization in chestnut restoration.

The Midlands Jr. Master Gardeners group will be giving a brief history of the American chestnut and festivities begin with refreshments at 10:00 a.m. with the formal program kicking off at 10:15 a.m. The program features not only the dedication of this iconic tree but also presentations on the importance of the American chestnut to the region. Speakers include TACF's president and CEO Bryan Burhans, former SCETV personality Jim Welch and Deputy State Forester Joel Felder of the South Carolina Forestry Commission.

Media should contact **Meghan Jordan, Director of Communications for TACF at (828) 713-9547** if they need additional information about the trees or background on TACF.

**When: Tuesday, April 22, 2009
10:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. (welcome remarks at 10:15 a.m.)**

Where: Riverbanks Zoo and Garden, in the Botanical Garden

Directions: Riverbanks Zoo and Garden is located at I-126 and Greystone Boulevard near downtown Columbia. The Botanical Garden entrance is located in West Columbia off Hwy. 378 at Botanical Parkway.

American chestnut

With its wide trunks and heights that stretched to 100 feet in the Eastern forests, wildlife and rural families alike favored the American chestnut throughout the 1800s and early 1900s for its nutritious nuts, an important cash crop for many Appalachian communities. As a straight hardwood lighter than oak and virtually rot resistant, chestnut timber was used for everything from railroad ties to musical instruments. A foreign fungus imported in 1904 devastated the tree, and by 1950 the king of the forest was nearly destroyed by the chestnut blight.

Chestnut trees in South Carolina

www.acf.org • chestnut@acf.org

TACF Headquarters Office • 160 Zillicoa Street, Suite D, Asheville, North Carolina 28801 • 828.281.0047
Meadowview Research Farms • 14005 Glenbrook Avenue, Meadowview, Virginia 24361 • 276.944.4631
Northern Appalachian Regional Office • Pennsylvania State University, 206 Forest Resources Lab, University Park, PA 16802 • 814.863.7192
New England Regional Office • USFS Northern Research Station, 705 Spear Street, South Burlington, VT 05403 • 802.999.8706
ARRI Partnership Office • Mountain State University, 322 South Kanawaha Street, Beckley, WV 25801 • 276.614.4777
Vermont Office • Post Office Box 4044, 469 Main Street, Suite 1, Bennington, VT • 802.447.0110

South Carolina has two of the approximately 600 large surviving American chestnut trees. Both are about 35 feet tall and one is located on Paris Mountain and the other is at the Cliffs at Glassy Creek. The trees have survived the chestnut blight which destroyed approximately four billion trees along the eastern part of the United States.

About TACF

The American Chestnut Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization headquartered in Asheville, NC. It has nearly 6,000 members and chapters in 17 states. TACF was established in 1983 with the sole purpose of restoring this majestic tree to its native forests in the eastern United States, and the Foundation has supported the efforts of scientists who are working to develop a blight-resistant American chestnut. For more information about the Foundation, please visit our website at www.acf.org.

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