

# The American Chestnut Foundation Policy on Seed/Seedling Distribution

## **Mission of TACF**

The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF) is a national non-profit organization formed in 1983 to determine whether chestnut blight resistance could be transferred from Asiatic species of chestnut to the American chestnut while still retaining the form of the American tree, and subsequently to begin a breeding program which would accomplish that goal. The mission of TACF is the development and deployment of many distinct lines of hybridized American chestnuts presenting high levels of chestnut blight resistance, in self-sustaining, naturally propagating populations throughout the original range of the tree. TACF also concerns itself with the study and control of the blight pathogen, identification and monitoring of other chestnut pathogens, and the development of appropriate response strategies.

## **BC<sub>3</sub>F<sub>3</sub> Seed Characteristics**

The TACF back-cross breeding program is expected to plant several hundred BC<sub>3</sub>F<sub>3</sub> trees in 2001. After selection for blight resistance and American form, these trees will be intercrossed and will produce, in approximately 2006, BC<sub>3</sub>F<sub>3</sub> - the first generation presumed to possess reforestation potential. These seeds will be (on average) 15/16ths American and are expected to be both highly resistant to blight and able to pass on this trait to all their progeny. They will not have been tested for either American form or blight resistance. They will be the subject of ongoing long-term testing and continued breeding and do not represent the end of the breeding program. Although the test program will require decades to verify the desired traits, during this time TACF expects to produce and distribute some quantities of these initial seeds to its members, cooperators, and the public.

## **Seed Recipients and Availability**

The first BC<sub>3</sub>F<sub>3</sub> seeds will be used for progeny testing with established cooperators and other organizations, and for populating seed orchards for mass production. Excess seed is expected to be made available to the membership at the earliest possible time, subject to the approval of TACF scientific advisors and the success of the seed production effort. However, increased seed production is an obvious necessary prerequisite to large-scale distribution, and the anticipated time frame for this production increase is between 2006 and 2010.

TACF requires cooperators to adhere to a Germplasm Agreement that restricts distribution, sale, transfer to a third party, and deployment of TACF seed without TACF approval. This is done to assure the scientific integrity of the project and prevent misrepresentation to the public.

## **Commercialization**

TACF is a not-for-profit organization with an on-going breeding, research and production program, therefore sales of chestnut seed and seedlings may eventually be used to support these efforts. However the mission of TACF is environmental, rather than financial, and 'commercialization' in the conventional sense, which involves the generation of profit for individual gain, is prohibited by applicable tax law and cannot be considered.

Commercial, government, university, and other cooperator organizations will probably play a part in achieving the goals of TACF, which are to develop the seed and see to its successful reintroduction by means consistent with TACF's mission and policies.

## **Preparatory Activities**

Chestnuts are not particularly easy to grow from seed and only slightly less difficult from seedlings. TACF encourages its members who may wish to eventually receive advanced hybrids to develop expertise in planting and caring for chestnuts. This expertise can be obtained through the cultivation of any chestnut species, and will increase the potential for successfully planting and growing TACF advanced hybrids, when these become available.