

# Media and Press Release

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**Event:** The planting of an American chestnut restoration orchard.

**Time:** Saturday, Oct 3, at 3 p.m.

**Place:** Bertrand Township Hall, 3835 Buffalo Rd. Buchanan, MI 49107

**Participants:** Boy Scout Troop 541, Buchanan. Bertrand Township, MI. The American Chestnut Foundation, The First Presbyterian Church of Buchanan

Bertrand Township is establishing the first American Chestnut restoration orchard in South West Michigan with the help of Boy Scout Troop 541, with materials donated by the First Presbyterian Church of Buchanan.

The American Chestnut tree was nearly wiped out between 1904 and 1940. Four billion trees died. At that time one in four trees in the Eastern Forest was an American chestnut. The blight which attacked the trees was accidentally introduced by the importation of Asian Chestnut trees and persists in our forests today.

In 1984 the American Chestnut Foundation was created to restore the American chestnut to its rightful place in our forest. The natural resistance of Asian Chestnuts had to be transferred to the American trees. Scientist and forestry experts began a back cross breeding program which has taken 31 years and seven generations of tree plantings. (see: [acf.org](http://acf.org))

The work of restoration has begun. The first efforts were aimed at strip mined areas in Appalachia. Where the economic devastation was felt the most.

Fernwood Botanical Garden, working with Arb-Net, was a pioneer in our area who is working to establish a demonstration chestnut orchard with Asian, heritage, and hybrid chestnut trees.

The breeding orchard being planted on Bertrand Township Hall Property will be protected by a germplasm agreement and cannot be used for commercial purposes.

### **Contacts**

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