

Interested in writing? We need a few more volunteer journalists! See Page 2.

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UPSTATE happenings

JANUARY 2015 ■ NEWSLETTER OF THE UPSTATE CHAPTER OF THE SC NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Upcoming Events ± Approximate time

Saturday, Jan 10, 10:30 am
DNR Workday at Stevens Creek HP
(McCormick County)

Coordinator: Mary Bunch, DNR

We will continue our war on invasive exotics like privet and Japanese honeysuckle. We'll also do some trail maintenance.

Wear appropriate work clothes, bring lunch, drinks, and extra gloves. Let's meet at the preserve parking area on Garrett Road at 10:30 am. Plan on two hours of work (we won't stop you from working longer).

In the event of snow or sleet on the 10th, the rain date is the next Saturday, the 17th. Jan 10th is a hog hunt w/dogs on WMAs, so wear visible colors.

Mary Bunch, (864) 654-6738 x15, bunchm@dnr.sc.gov

Tuesday, Jan 20, 7:00 pm, SWU, Central
Speaker: Joe James

(See Page 1.)

Tuesday, Feb 17, 7:00 pm, Easley High School Auditorium, 154 Green Wave Blvd., Easley

Speaker: Patrick McMillan

Plan to join us for Dr. Patrick McMillan's presentation on the SC Botanical Garden's Natural Heritage Trail.

Patrick is the host, co-creator, and writer of the popular, Emmy-award winning ETV nature program *Expeditions with Patrick McMillan*.



Patrick McMillan

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MY SPECIAL THANKS

My special thanks go to Betsy George and Bill Stringer who co-chaired the Fall Plant Sale Committee. Betsy organized vendor participation and Bill organized plant procurements. They both led a hard working committed team that included Judy Seeley, Jo Anne Conner, Susan Lochridge, Rita Lance, Cathy Foster, Miller Putnam, Bill Sharpton, Rick Huffman, and Frank Holleman. Their efforts, along with 33 others, helped raise over \$4,100 from this Fall's sales.

Well done my friends!

— Dan Whitten

"Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire..."



We sing about chestnuts roasting over an open fire, but chances are that most of us have never done it. If we have, the nuts were probably not from the fabled American chestnut (*Castanea dentata*) — the tree that once dominated eastern forests, reaching heights of over 100' and diameters of over 10', whose nuts were an important food for man and wildlife alike. No, nowadays we'd probably be roasting European chestnuts: not as sweet and flavorful as the American chestnut.

Our chestnuts were killed by two pathogens. In 1876, the fungus *Cryphonectria parasitica*, cause of the well-known chestnut blight, arrived in the Northeast, hitchhiking on Japanese chestnuts destined for the ornamental trade. Thirty years later, lesions were found on American chestnuts in New York, and fifty years after that the American chestnut was virtually eliminated from the eastern deciduous forest ecosystem.

Virtually eliminated, but not quite. Some continue to sprout from stumps — usually to be attacked by the blight just as they become mature enough to flower.

Enter the American Chestnut Foundation. The ambitious goal of this Asheville-based organization is the restoration of the American chestnut to its former niche in the ecosystem. To that end, surviving American chestnut trees have been sought out and hand-crossed with their blight-resistant Chinese cousins, and the resulting progeny evaluated, screened for desirable characteristics, and exposed to the pathogens. Survivors may be selected to contribute their genes to the next generation. Generation after generation of meticulously documented backcrosses and intercrosses have achieved plants that are 15 parts American to 1 part Chinese, retaining the stature and characteristics of the American along with the blight resistance of the Chinese.

This patient and prodigious effort involves 6,000 members and volunteers, and one of those is Joe James, a retired orthopedic surgeon in Oconee County. Dr. James planted his first crop of American Chestnut Foundation seeds in 2001.

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Joe James

Chestnut Return Farm, Seneca, SC

Tuesday, January 20, 7:00 pm

Founders Hall in Dining Commons,
Southern Wesleyan University, Central

Attn: Writers! We need a few journalists to interview our upcoming program speakers for Feb, May, Oct, and Nov. Get published! Contact steve@marlowcreativeservices.com

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Upstate Chapter

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Upcoming Events ± Approximate time

Fri-Sun, March 6-7-8, Spring Southern Home & Garden Show, Greenville

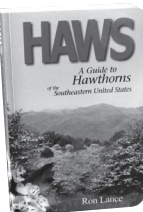
Booth volunteers — Sign up early! Email steve@marlowcreativeservices.com

Tuesday, March 17, 7:00 pm, Landrum Depot, Landrum (Spartanburg County)

Speaker: Ron Lance

"For a long portion of my early life, hawthorns were merely a mob of thorny plants to be avoided while negotiating the outdoors. Today, after 24 years of peculiar attention directed at hawthorns... this [new] book is thus a compilation and culmination of research, nursery and field work that has been gleaned from over two decades of observation."

Ron is a lifetime resident of the Southeastern U.S., active in biology, forestry, botany and horticulture roles since 1975. He is currently a biologist/land manager with the North American Land Trust. Ron's book, *HAWS: A Guide to Hawthorns of the Southeastern United States*, will be for sale at the meeting in Landrum.



Tuesday, April 21, 7:00 pm, Central Program: Nature Journaling

Presenter: Gale McKinley

Gale McKinley is an award-winning artist who strives to create artwork that "will trigger in others the realization that nature is not an entity apart from ourselves, but that we are an integral part of the natural world..."

Tuesday, May 19, 7:00 pm, Greenville

Speaker: Tim Lee

Tim is a Naturalist and Interpretive Ranger with the SC State Park Service at Caesar's Head and Jones Gap State Parks. His responsibilities include educational programs and exhibits, as well as inventorying and monitoring flora and fauna. Tim has been instrumental in the success of the Upstate Master Naturalist program.

"Chestnuts Roasting..." Continued from page 1

It was through James' observations and his collaboration with Steve Jeffers, a plant pathologist at Clemson University, that another pathogen, *Phytophthora cinnamomi*, was isolated as the causative organism of a deadly "root rot" affecting chestnut seedlings. Often incorrectly called a fungus, *Phytophthora* are more properly called "oomycetes". Their closest relatives are brown algae. Other species of *Phytophthora* are responsible for Sudden Oak Death and the Irish potato famine. It is devastating to the American chestnut, which has no resistance to it, whereas Chinese chestnut is fully resistant.

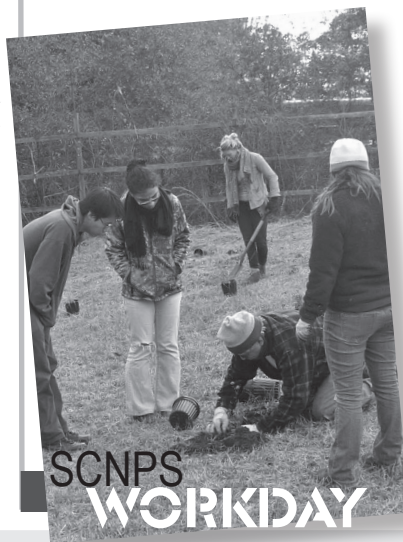
Phytophthora cinnamomi reached lower South Carolina in the late 1700s and has gradually moved northward. According to James, *Phytophthora* is widespread in low elevations in the South, and the red clay of his Chestnut Return Farm is no exception.

That makes it an ideal setting to evaluate hybrid seedlings for resistance, to identify familial lines with high levels of resistance, and ultimately to create a population of trees that is resistant to both *Cryphonectria* and *Phytophthora*. Joe's screening program has been carried out every year since 2004 and has attracted national attention. Thousands of seedlings have been evaluated. Most have failed, but some have survived. *The goal may be in sight.*

Come find out!

— Janie Marlow

For more information on chestnuts and chestnut blight, visit the American Chestnut Foundation, <http://www.acf.org>.



Clemson students from the Wildlife Society chapter and Students for Environmental Action join SCNPS members on a planting workday. (Photos courtesy of Cathy Foster)

at the "Skip Still Meadow" SC DNR
Clemson Office — October 28