

For immediate use

Contact: Jennifer Peterson, Publications & Communications Coordinator, NC Botanical Garden, 919-962-9457; [jennifer.peterson@unc.edu](mailto:jennifer.peterson@unc.edu); <http://ncbg.unc.edu>

## Chestnut Planting at Coker Arboretum

**Chapel Hill, NC** – On Arbor Day, **Friday, April 24, 1-2 pm**, the North Carolina Botanical Garden will host a ceremonial planting of potentially blight-resistant American chestnut seedlings at Coker Arboretum on the UNC-Chapel Hill campus. Tom Saielli from The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF) will discuss the history and ecology of the American chestnut during the planting event. *This event is free to the general public, but preregistration is required. To register, please go to <http://ncbg.unc.edu/calendar>.*

Once the mighty giants of the eastern forest, American chestnuts stood up to 100 feet tall, and numbered in the billions. In the beginning of the 20th century, the fungal pathogen responsible for chestnut blight was accidentally imported from Asia and spread rapidly through the eastern forests. By 1950, the fungus had eliminated the chestnut as a mature forest tree.

The chestnut seedlings to be planted at Coker Arboretum, called Restoration Chestnuts 1.0, are part of a unique breeding program led by TACF to restore the American chestnut to the eastern forests of America. With 5,000 members and volunteers in 23 states, TACF is in the process of planting these seedlings in locations all across the United States.

This event is part of the NCBG's "Among Our Trees" exhibit that runs through May 15. The exhibit invites visitors to celebrate southeastern native trees and understand their importance to the sciences, arts, people, and nature. Exhibits, programs, and events chronicle the scientific, utilitarian, and esthetic impact of southeastern native trees upon biodiversity, ecological well-being, human survival, and artistic expression. The exhibit includes an art exhibition, self-guided garden tours, garden shop finds, native plant sales, family events, poetry, docent tours, nature trail walks, workshops, lectures, and special guests.

The NCBG, part of the University of North Carolina, is a 1,000-acre assemblage of display gardens and natural areas. It is nationally known as a center for the study, display, interpretation, and conservation of plants. Through its educational, recreational, therapeutic horticulture, and research programs, it extends opportunities for connection with nature to people of all abilities and backgrounds. The Garden is open seven days a week and admission is free. Find out more at <http://ncbg.unc.edu>.