

Enthusiastic Members Lend Essential Support

BY JAMES R. FAZIO

When mother and daughter Mike Sheridan and Kate Larch read Arbor Day Foundation's appeal for sources of wild hazelnuts, they knew just where to look. They told us their woodland near Rhinelander, Wisconsin, "is bursting with them." They sent in some of the ripe nuts and told us, "If the project will improve hazelnuts, we're all for it."

For Barbara Freeman of Auburn, California, the search for wild hazels took her on "a trip down Memory Lane." She remembered seeing "a hazelnut tree" 35 years ago and set out to look for it – and found an entire grove. Marie Rimshaw, now living in Boston, remembered as a teenager in Wisconsin picking wild hazelnuts and including them in delicious baked goods. "I couldn't wait to get back to my cottage for a vacation and to once again look for hazelnuts," she reported.

Samples of wild hazelnuts have been provided by over 50 members so far and more are arriving daily. Some have encouraging notes attached, including one – "I love you guys!"

The feeling is mutual as researchers with the Hybrid Hazelnut Consortium work to develop superior hazelnut hybrids. Dr. Thomas Molnar of Rutgers University says, "Having help from Arbor Day Foundation members to collect wild hazelnuts is an unprecedented and important component of our breeding and research efforts. Never before has such a network of people been organized to search for hazelnuts in the wild to provide new sources of plants to be used in hazelnut breeding. We are now able to reach far and wide in search of native hazelnuts that can contribute genes and help us expand the range of hazelnut production." Dr. Molnar points out that while researchers have access to USDA plant germplasm and various private sources, these limited collections do not represent the wide genetic diversity, variation and collection of useful traits as can be found in unrelated plants growing in the wild scattered throughout the U.S. As a result, the researchers are making exciting breakthroughs in gene sequencing using plants that show traits such as extreme cold hardiness, resistance to disease, drought tolerance, and high yields.

Throughout this ground-breaking research, Arbor Day Foundation members have provided essential support by:

- Donating funds to develop the current hazelnut research field at Arbor Day Farm
- Planting experimental hazelnuts in yards and fields throughout America
- Collecting data on growth, viability and nut production annually
- Locating and reporting on wild hazelnuts

While the research leading to new and improved hybrids continues, so does the need for member participation. Over the coming year, members will be asked to keep up the essential flow of information based on both planted and wild



Beautiful, healthy involucres that contain large nuts that are delicious and nutritious is one goal of the member-supported research project.

hazelnuts. However, a new part of the project will also be initiated. Watch for an announcement seeking seeds from the best of your bushes that were started from seedlings sent from the Foundation. Seedlings will be grown from these nuts, then transplanted to create enhanced hazelnut fields that reflect greater genetic diversity and an even higher level of quality.

"In human culture is the preservation of wildness."

—WENDELL BERRY

The unique coalition of Arbor Day Foundation members, researchers from three universities and other institutions, and Arbor Day Farm staff is resulting in hybrid hazelnuts that will include the best in flavor, productivity, planting range and benefits for the land and the economy. The keystone of the project is member participation. A thanks to all for your interest and continuing support.

For more information, including how you can be involved, please visit arborday.org/programs/hazelnuts/consortium.

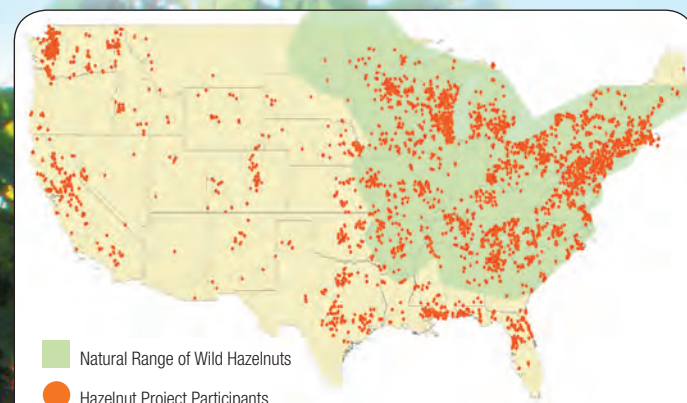


A Hazelnut Project

When Glenn Myers of Fredericktown, Ohio, ran for public office, a goal was to unite the people of his township. At about the same time, the Arbor Day hazelnut project caught the attention of this retired biology teacher and he thought growing hazelnuts was something all the residents could do on their 3-acre parcels. To get the word out, as well as to get the people of three traditionally-different sectors of his township communicating with each other, Glenn started the biannual Perry Township Newsletter that includes a section promoting a Perry Township Hazelnut Society. His vision is for every family to have their own hazelnut orchard someday. His consists of sixteen healthy bushes. Glenn says, "I'm at the age where I don't care about anything, but at the same time I care about everything." He sees hazelnuts contributing to a better world and is doing his best to pass along his passion to the landowners in his township and the younger generation.



Glenn Myers is a man with a vision--with hazelnuts playing an important role.



Member participation will help expand the range of hazelnuts and provide farmers with a sustainable, environmentally friendly crop.

"In wildness is the preservation of the world."

—THOREAU