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## *American chestnut*

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Once abundant from Maine  
to Michigan and south to  
Georgia and Alabama, mature  
American chestnuts (*Casta-  
nea dentata*) are but a  
memory in the forests of the  
eastern United States. Intro-  
duced from China in the early

1900's, chestnut blight brought this species to the  
verge of extinction. American chestnut was once one  
of the most abundant of the North American hard-  
woods. Highly valued for its wood, which is very  
durable and virtually decay resistant, American chest-  
nut was once used from the cradle to the grave to  
build anything meant to last - furniture, shingles, siding,  
fence rails and posts, railroad ties, and caskets. Aside  
from the versatile and valuable wood, both man and  
animal alike were dependent on the American  
chestnut's abundant annual nut crops.

And though its numbers are vastly diminished in the  
great hardwood forests of the east, many people are  
striving to bring the American chestnut back. Research  
programs are working with American and Chinese  
chestnut crosses to increase natural resistance to the  
blight and there is a continuing search for native trees

