
Red Fern Farm

2021 Catalog/Newsletter

www.redfernfarm.com

1(319)729-5905

So, You're Thinking About Planting Chestnuts....

Oftentimes, when people are thinking about planting chestnuts, the first thing they do is start looking for nursery sources and reading variety descriptions in catalogs. The decision of where to plant them is almost an afterthought. This is not the order in which these decisions should be made. If you are thinking about planting chestnuts, the very first thing you should do is find out if you even have a site suited to chestnuts - or, if you don't yet have land you need to locate and acquire land suited to chestnuts.

Chestnuts absolutely require well drained soil on the acid side of the pH scale. The site needs to be located within the USDA plant hardiness zones 4b-9a and maybe the northern fringes of 9b. For most people, the biggest challenge in site selection is identifying whether a soil is well drained or not. People often tell me they know their soil is well drained because, "it's sandy" or "it's on a slope."

While soil texture and slope are two factors affecting drainage, neither is definitive, and it is possible to have poorly drained sandy soil on a steep slope.

In most cases, the easiest way to evaluate the soil drainage characteristics of a site is to use a soil map to identify the soils on the site, then look at the description for the soil series. If you have a USDA Soil Survey book for your county, you can find a soil map of your

farm, identify every soil type on every site you are considering, and read the description for each soil type. The drainage characteristics will always be given in the very first sentence of the description.

For example, "The Fayette series consists of very deep, well drained soils formed in loess." In that first sentence, you may find the words (ranging from wettest to driest) "very poorly drained," "poorly drained," "somewhat poorly drained," "moderately well drained," "well drained," and all the way to "excessively well drained."

An added benefit to the Soil Survey book is that you can get a feel for potential productivity of a site by consulting the table near the back of the book (usually Table 7., but not always) with the title "Woodland Management and Productivity." One column in the table has the title, "Site Index." If a soil series appears on this table, it will have a number corresponding to a species of tree (or maybe a couple of numbers corresponding to a couple of tree species). These site index numbers represent the height in feet that the tree will grow in 50 years, on that soil. This is a very good indication of how well a tree



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will grow (and how well a nut tree could produce) on a given soil type. You will not find a site index number for chestnuts on this table, but you can use upland oaks (white oak and red oak in Iowa) as a proxy for chestnuts. You will find site index numbers for upland oaks ranging from 45 (marginally acceptable) up to 80 (the very best). If you are a landowner, you should be able to go to the USDA Service Center for your county and request a free copy of the Soil Survey book from the NRCS office.

If you don't have and are unable to acquire a Soil Survey book, but you have access to a computer and internet, you can find the drainage characteristics for the soils on your farm from the Web Soil Survey

www.websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov. You may need to take the tutorial on the home page to learn to use the site. A list of soil types will appear to the left of the soil map for your farm. If you click on the name of the soil type, a lot of technical information about that soil will appear. You will find the drainage characteristics for that soil under "Properties and Qualities."

A definitive test of soil drainage is to dig a 3' deep "post hole" and slide a 4" X 3 1/2' piece of PVC pipe down the hole, instead of a fence post. It's best to put a removable cap on top of the pipe to prevent small animals from falling down inside and getting trapped. Monitor the bottom of the pipe several times per year,

especially after heavy rain events. If the pipe fills with water you can be sure that site won't be suited to chestnuts. On the other hand, if the water in the bottom of the pipe always drains away within a day or two following heavy rains, it is probably well drained.

If you live in Iowa you have an additional tool for evaluating sites for chestnuts. All of the soil series in Iowa have been divided into 10 classes based on how well suited they are for growing trees. Once you have identified your soil series you can go to the "Iowa Woodland Suitability Recommendations" and look it up and see in what class your soil has been placed. Class 1 is "somewhat poorly drained" and unsuited to chestnuts. Class 2 includes the poorly drained and very poorly drained soils. Class 3 is the best for chestnuts and most other trees. These soils are deep, fertile, moist but well drained, and have a good balance of clay, silt, and sand particles. These soils also have the highest site index numbers. Classes 4-7 are suited to chestnuts, but differ from Class 3 soils: Class 4 soils have higher clay content. Class 5 soils have higher sand content. Class 6 soils have bedrock 2' to 3' below the surface. Class 7 soils are very sandy and excessively well drained, and would require irrigation to be productive of chestnuts. Classes 8-10 are not suited to chestnuts. You can find the Iowa Woodland Suitability Recommendations on our website at www.redfernfarm.com, and elsewhere on the internet.

Once you have determined you have a site suited to chestnuts, then you are ready



to develop a planting plan and start looking for nursery sources and varieties.
- *Tom Wahl*

Red Fern Farm Internships

We are always happy to share our knowledge at Red Fern Farm. Internships have become a useful way for us to do this. An internship can be as short as 3 days or as long as 2 months. We do ask for references and a willingness to work alongside us on long work days. In exchange we give you meaningful, skill building duties. We provide the training along with room (fold out coach in our library) and board (meals shared with the family).

Our home is small and you will be sharing the single bathroom with 4 other adults. Camping is also an option. Give us a call or email to see if this is a fit for



Anne Carey & Dane Mainella, 2020 Interns, haul chestnut seedlings to their nursery bed.

you. We can also provide you with names of people who have interned with us in the past. In 2021 we will be participating in Practical Farmers of Iowa 's La-

bor4Learning" and Savanna Institute's Apprenticeship program. - *Kathy Dice*

You Pick at Red Fern Farm 2020

The 2020 harvest season at Red Fern Farm was fascinating. Because of May freezes we had no heartnuts and almost no chestnuts (291 pounds total harvest). However the pawpaws put on an amazing crop (2,500+ pounds). Our chestnut customers

were sad, but eased their pain with pawpaws and Asian pears. Diversity of crops is vitally important!

If you think you might like to try out our you-pick, you can call or email us anytime. We will add your name and email to the lists of people to be contacted as these fruits and nuts ripen. When

the item or items you are interested in start to ripen, we send out a general email inviting you to contact us to schedule a date to come and harvest.

- *Kathy Dice*



The Red Shed weigh out station.



Chinese Chestnut For 2021 (*Castanea mollissima*)

Check out our website for information on growing chestnut trees. Be sure to read our “Chestnut Grower’s Primer” which is available free on-line.

The May freezes the Spring of 2020 affected what we have available to grow 2021. We will not be able to offer many of our own selections this year (Red Fern Super, QingSu)

We do have seedlings of some of the very best cultivars available. Although “open pollinated”, their most likely pollenizers are other good Chinese cultivars. This greatly increases the likelihood that the seedlings will be as good or even better than their parents. We fully expect that many new, superior cultivars will result from these seedlings.

The following pages have brief descriptions of the parent trees. These seedling trees are for pick up early summer through August 31. They are in 9 inch tall pots. We have no bare-rooted chestnut trees available for shipping. Check our website, email or call for availability. Order early to reserve your trees.

Potted chestnuts: Potted trees are great for most people because they eliminate transplant shock. They also are quicker & easier to plant because they use a smaller planting hole. These trees are grown from seed each spring and are ready by late June. Potted trees can be planted spring, summer or fall.

Pot sizes for 2021: To ramp up our chestnut production and offer chestnuts earlier in the season we are offering some of our chestnuts in smaller, narrower pots. These pots are still 9 inches tall for excellent root development, but are only 2 7/8 x 2 7/8 inches square at the top instead of 4 x 4 inches square like our medium size pots. This should allow the roots to fill in the smaller pots sooner and thus the trees will be ready to leave our nursery earlier in the summer. It also means the pots will dry out quicker and the tops can quickly out grow the capacity of the pots. The chestnut trees grown in these smaller pots will need to be picked up from our nursery by June 31. We will only be growing these pots by pre-order. Orders will need to be placed before May1.

Parent Cultivars:

Gideon - A cold hardy, regular heavy bearer of high quality, large to extra large nuts. Gideon is exceptionally good, both as a parent tree and as a companion for Qing. Hardy to zone 5b.



Qing - is currently the standard for comparison among Chinese chestnuts. It produces an extra large nut with a dark mahogany color, an unusually glossy luster, and exceptional flavor and keeping qualities. Cold hardy to at least -30°F, zone 5a.

Luvall's Monster - This American hybrid is crossed with good Chinese cultivars to make super cold-hardy seedlings that bear medium to extra large sized, Chinese-type nuts. Though they can be as much as twice as productive as Chinese chestnuts, they are pollen-sterile, so they need good **pollenizers** nearby. Hardy to zone 4b.



Peach Chestnut seedlings in medium pots.

Mossbarger - Reportedly the most cold hardy Chinese cultivar (hardy to -40°F, zone 4b). Nut size, productivity, and quality similar to Peach and Gideon. A good companion to Luvall's Monster seedlings in far north locations.

Peach - one of Greg Millers' (president of the Chestnut Growers of America and founder of Empire Chestnuts) very best selections. It is a reliable bearer of extra-large, high quality nuts. This is one of the few varieties that never over-bears. The nuts are fuzzy like a peach, thus the name. Hardy to zone 5b.

Resilient - This 29 year-old tree has been for many years a consistent and profitable heavy bearer of large nuts, but without drawing particular attention to itself. That changed in 2019 when this tree was the only one out of over 1,000 bearing-age chestnuts to remain healthy and productive. It produced a normal crop of nuts following the horrible winter/spring of 2018 – 2019.

	1 - 9 trees	10 - 99 trees	100 or more
Chestnut Seedling, small pot	\$15.00 each	\$10.00 each	\$7.00 each
Chestnut Seedling, Medium pot	\$18.00 each	\$13.00 each	\$10.00 each

Cash for Pots and Trays

The pots and trays we use in our nursery for growing trees are reusable. Often our customers enjoy using the pots themselves, but you can return the pots and trays to Red Fern Farm for cash. We buy back trays and pots in good condition. Refunds are available at \$1 for each tray and 10¢ for each medium, nine inch pot. If the pots are too badly cracked or brittle for reuse, they are accepted wherever #2 plastics are taken at recycling center - *Kathy*



Heartnut (*Juglans ailantifolia*)

Heartnut is a genetic mutation of the Japanese walnut. The mutation produces a flattened, Valentine-heart shaped nut which cracks and releases the kernel easily. According to Tom, the kernel is the sweetest and mildest-tasting of all the walnuts.

Heartnuts are variable, but tend to be precocious and heavy bearing, and preliminary indications suggest they may be resistant to Thousand Canker Disease. Not all heartnut seedlings will grow into trees that produce heartnuts. Many will “revert back to wild type” and produce only the normal Japanese walnut, which is rounded, thick-shelled, difficult to crack, and commercially worthless. It may be necessary to plant several to get a single good one. Quantities are limited. 12 - 18 inch tall seedlings in 9 inch tall pots. Zones 5 - 6.

Potted or Bare-rooted Seedlings \$6.00 each

(Available potted July-Aug., bare-root April only)

**American Persimmon (*Diospiros virginiana*)**

The American Persimmon is native to the southeast 1/2 of the United States. They are hardy to about -30°F. The trees produce abundant crops of 1" - 2" diameter fruits, but only on female trees. Seedlings can not be sexed until they flower at about 4' to 5' tall (about 3 to 4 years old). The fruits are among the sweetest in the world, and inspired the scientific name for the tree which means “food for the gods”. Zone 5b - 10. We have a mix of seedlings of superior grafted varieties including ‘Yates’, ‘SAA Pieper’ and ‘Prok’. We also have seedlings of ‘Wapello’ which makes excellent root stock or as a wild-life tree. The seedlings are 6 inches tall in 9 X 4 X 4 inch pots.

Potted Seedling Persimmons \$6.00 each *(Available potted July-Aug.)*

**Pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*)**

The pawpaw or “prairie banana” has a 4 - 6 inch long fruit that resembles a mango, but with a rich banana/mango - like flavor. Demand for fruit exceeds supply. It is hard to believe a fruit with such a wonderful tropical-fruit flavor can grow in Iowa. When small, these trees are very fragile and need tender loving care (including mulch and tree shelter) to get established. Two trees are needed for cross pollination. We have seedlings in pots or bare-rooted from two different strains - Varietal and Shensus in two sizes - under 12 inches and over 12 inches.



Varietal Pawpaw Seedlings: Open pollinated with grafted varieties such as ‘NC1’, ‘Pennsylvania Golden’, ‘Taytwo’, ‘Prolific’, ‘Shenandoah’, ‘Susquehanna’ and

‘Overlease’ as their mother tree.

Bare-rooted or Potted: Large \$20 Small \$8

Shensus Pawpaw Seedlings: These seedlings have either ‘Shenandoah’ or ‘Susquehanna’ as their mother tree and ‘Shenandoah’ or ‘Susquehanna’ as the pollinizer tree. Seedlings of their crosses have produced some outstanding new genetics: ‘Regulus’, ‘Atria’, Betria’.

Bare-rooted or Potted: Large \$25 Small \$10

Scion Wood *(note scion wood are NOT trees)*

We offer high quality scion wood at **\$5/linear foot**. Quantities of some varieties are limited. Call, email, or check our website for availability and descriptions of each variety. Scionwood will be carefully labeled and shipped early spring. Orders for scionwood must be received by February 1 or March 1, depending on varieties. Sold out varieties are ~~crossed out~~

Heartnut: Imshu, Pyke, CW3, Grimo, Mitchell, KimK

(Deadline March 1)

Black Walnut: Hay, S147, S129 *(Deadline March 1)*

Chestnut: Mossbarger, Gideon, Szego, Auburn Super, Peach, Red Fern Super and QingSu.

(Deadline March 1)

Plum: Toka, Waneta, and Superior *(Deadline Feb.1)*

Apple, Heirloom: Ashmead’s Kernel, Chestnut crab, Cox’s Orange Pippin, Esopus Spitzenburg, Roxbury Russet, Wealthy, Wickson, Wolf River, Golden Russet, Kind David *(Deadline Feb.1)*



Apple Modern: Karmijin de Sonnevile, Liberty *(Deadline Feb.1)*

Asian pear: Shinko, Korean Giant, Seuri *(Deadline Feb.1)*

European pear: Comice, Concorde, Lincoln, Luscious, Magness, Maxine, Staceyville, Summercrisp, Comptessa, Gourmet *(Deadline Feb.1)*

Pawpaw: Overlease, NC1, Pennsylvania Golden I or II, Taytwo, Prolific, Regulus, Rigel, Atria, Betria, Gatria, Canopus, Asterion *(Deadline March 1)*

American persimmon: Yates, Osage, Prok, Lehman’s Delight (AKA “100-46”), Lena (AKA “Mitchellena”), Zsukis (♂ only), SAA Pieper, Evelyn, H120, H118, A118, WS810, Morris Burton *(Deadline March 1)*

Chestnut Seed Nuts

We have been selling chestnut seed nuts for the past few years. These are the same seeds we use to start some of the varieties in our nursery. Growing instructions are included and available from our website. These chestnuts were collected from mother trees of named grafted varieties. The nuts are kept in high humidity and shipped in plastic bags. Orders should be received by October 1. Check our website for availability. We ship only in November. **\$7/pound + shipping**



Pawpaw Seed

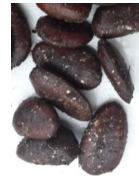
This is seed we use to start our own pawpaw seedlings in our nursery. It was collected and stored to keep the seeds as viable as possible. Order early. We sell out usually well before spring. Prices do not include shipping.

Varietal: Seed of grafted varieties and superior seedlings that we find do well in south-east Iowa.

RVT: Pawpaw seeds collected from a Regional Variety Trail planting near Columbus Junction, Iowa. Seed was collected only from the interior of the planting, not from guard rows. Up to 28 grafted varieties were included in this planting.

Shensus: These seeds have either Shenandoah or Susquehanna as their mother tree and Shenandoah or Susquehanna as the pollinizer tree. Seedlings of these crosses have produced some outstanding new genetics (Regulus, Atria, Betria).

	Per seed	Ounce	1/4 pound	1/2 pound	pound
Varietal	25¢	\$6	\$20	\$25	\$38
RVT	25¢	\$7	\$20	\$28	\$40
Shensus	50¢	\$10	\$25	\$30	\$45



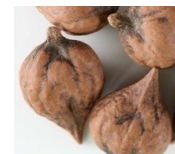
Hazel Seed Nuts

These hybrid hazel seed nuts were harvested from bushes that produce good quantities of high quality nuts. These are the seed nuts we used at our nursery to create our hazel seedlings. We take orders for hazel seed nuts to be collected each fall. We recommend placing orders before August 31. The seed nuts will be shipped the November of the year they are harvested. These will be unhusked hazels. Available while supplies last.

\$10/pound + shipping

Heartnut Seed

These seed nuts are collected from good heartnut trees. All seed is open pollinated. Orders should be received by October 1. We ship in November through April while supplies last. **\$10/pound + shipping**



Persimmon Seed

We have seed collected from grafted American persimmons - Yates, Osage, Prok and SAA Piper. This seed is open pollinated. We also have mixed seed. Orders should be received by October 1. We ship November through April while supplies last. **\$10/pound + shipping**



Tree Shelters (prices subject to change depending on suppliers) We don't plant trees without some kind of shelters. We offer the following low prices for pickup from our farm. Compare our prices with Plantra.com . We are a dealer for Plantra and pass on our discounts to fellow tree planters.

5 foot tree shelters - from Plantra, solid with ventilation. Great for chestnuts, persimmon, ect. Come with ties and bluebird netting. No stakes included. These 5 foot shelters can be cut into 3 shelters, 18" long, for pawpaws. \$2.91 + tax. (no quantity discounts)

Stakes for 5 foot shelters - These 74 inch tall fiberglass stakes from Plantra are long lasting and well designed for the 5 foot shelters. These are a cheap alternative if you don't want to cut 1/2 inch rebar into stakes. Driver included for 30 or more stakes.

\$2.40 + tax. (no quantity discounts)



18 inch Mesh shelters - Good rabbit protection for blueberries, hazels, or other multi stemmed shrubs. The branches of the shrub grow through the mesh. 75¢ each + tax. (no quantity discounts)

Drop Shipping Shelters or Stakes We can arrange for drop shipping of large orders from Plantra. Shelters and stakes are sold in packs of 10. You must order a minimum, shown below, to get the free shipping. Call for pricing on stakes alone.

**5-foot shelters:**

1,200 and more shelters at \$2.91/shelter

Stake and 5-foot Shelter combo:

480 and more combos at \$5/shelter & stake

Order Information

Potted Trees are available spring thru August for pickup from our nursery. We need a 25% deposit to reserve trees for you at our farm.

When you arrive to collect your trees, the balance will be due. Call to arrange a pickup time so we can be sure to assist you fully in loading the trees and answering any questions you may have.

Shipping for 2021:

We only ship bare-root trees in April. We do **NOT** ship potted trees. All orders being shipped must be paid in full in advance. Call or email for more ordering information.

Shipping Costs:

Orders of \$70 and less...add \$16.00
Orders over \$70...add 17% of order.
Full payment for trees and shipping is due with order.

Sales Tax?

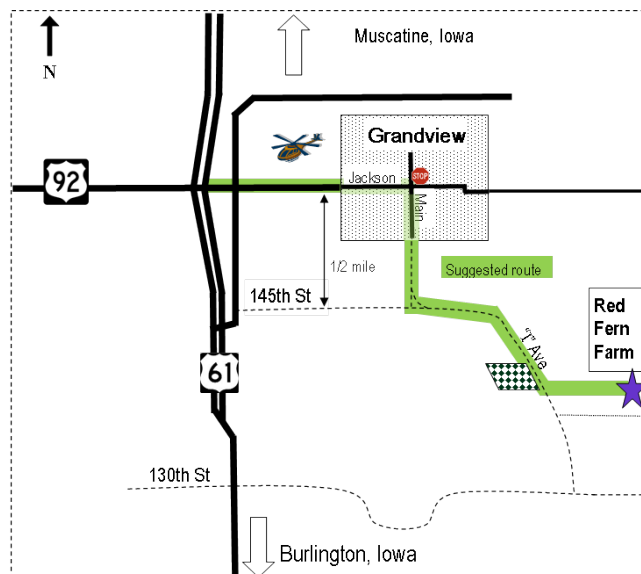
All our customers must plan to sell some or all of the produce from the plants we sell. We only collect sales tax on shelters and stakes.



Red Fern Farm:
Tom Wahl & Kathy Dice
(319)729-5905
tom@redfernfarm.com



We are located 1 & 1/2 miles southeast of Grandview, Iowa, between Muscatine and Burlington near Highway 61. The easiest way to find us is to get to the junction of Highways 61 and 92 near Grandview, Iowa (watch for the helicopter at the Veterans' Memorial). Travel into Grandview (eastward) until you come to the 4-way stop at Jackson and Main. Turn right (south) onto Main and continue south out of town. The road becomes gravel. The road will intersect with 145th Str., ease left and continue. Travel about 1 mile. You'll be able to see a large tree planting, then a house on the right. Turn down our lane on the left (across from the big white house).



No Internet? Use This Order Form *(but call first to check on availability!)*

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____ Telephone, primary(_____) _____

Secondary(_____) _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ email _____

Quantity	Description	Price	Total Price

Make Checks
payable and mail to:
Red Fern Farm
13882 I Ave
Wapello, IA 52653

SubtotalSales Tax (shelters and
stakes only)

Shipping? (see page 14)

Total25% deposit
(100% of total required for shipping)

Amount Enclosed

Substitutions:		Substitute
		Back order
		Refund

About Red Fern Farm...

Red Fern Farm is a family owned nursery and farm run by Tom Wahl and Kathy Dice. It is also the site of ongoing research on a variety of tree crops.

We offer a variety of trees and advice on their planting and care. We would be happy to answer your questions. To visit our nursery, groves or to pick up trees, please call ahead to schedule an appointment.

One of our goals is to promote the use of tree crops in agriculture. We are passionate about trees. If you are interested in using Tom and/or Kathy for a speaker, give us a call.



A nursery of trees and ideas.

Red Fern Farm
13882 "I" Ave.
Wapello, Iowa 52653