



# COUNTY OF NORTHAMPTON

**BECKY A. BARTLETT**  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION

**OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE**  
NORTHAMPTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
669 WASHINGTON STREET  
EASTON, PENNSYLVANIA 18042  
Phone: 610-829-6250  
Fax: 610-559-3722  
Email: [BBartlett@northamptoncounty.org](mailto:BBartlett@northamptoncounty.org)

**DATE: July 6, 2018**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact: Becky Bartlett**  
**610-829-6250**  
[bbartlett@northamptoncounty.org](mailto:bbartlett@northamptoncounty.org)

## **County of Northampton to Participate in Restoration of Chestnut Trees**

**WHO: Northampton County Parks Department**

**WHAT: Chestnut Tree Restoration Project**

**WHEN: Summer 2018**

Northampton County is participating in the Chestnut Tree Restoration Project by accepting a donation of twenty-four seedlings in an effort to reestablish the trees in Pennsylvania.

“We’re thrilled to be a part of the effort to bring back the American Chestnut tree,” County Executive Lamont McClure said. “To bring this tree back to our County would restore an important American legacy.”

The American Chestnut tree (*Castanea dentate*) was once the dominant hardwood tree on the eastern side of the country. The rot resistant wood was used to build furniture and

fencing while the nuts provided an important food source for birds, animals and humans alike.

The trees fell victim to a fungal infection in the early part of the twentieth century. Forty years after the introduction of the blight, the American Chestnut tree, which had made up twenty-five percent of the forest, was functionally extinct which negatively affected both the economy and the forest ecology.

The American Chestnut Foundation is trying to restore the trees via scientific research and breeding. Genetically, the donated seedlings should be exactly like the native trees except for resistance to the blight (*Cryphonectria parasitica*). At the July 5<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Northampton County Council approved a donation of twenty-four seedlings for the Parks and Recreation Department to plant at various parks and county-owned land in hopes of reestablishing the trees.

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