

SONG Executive

President & Guest Editor-
Ernie Grimo 905-934-6887

Past President -
Bruce w. Thurston 519-740-6220

Vice-President -
Nathan Crocker 519-723-2121

Secretary -
John Flys 416-579-7706

Treasurer / Membership -
Gordon Chinnick 416-721-6544

Research Leader – Hazelnuts
Martin Hodgson 519-688-0752

Research Leader - Heartnuts
Olga Crocker 519-723-2121

Research Leader – Persian Walnuts
Torri Warner 905-562-5637

Research Leader - Black Walnuts
Geoff Christou
Geoff.christou@gmail.com

Social Media Leader -Felix Winkelaar
Fel1_win618@hotmail.com

Director - Bohdan Kowalyk

Editor Song News -Bruce Thurston
519-740-6220 or
b.thurston@bell.net

Librarian - Gordon Wilkinson
gwilkinson001@gmail.com

Financial Statement Reviewer
Joyce Branston-Hunter
905-774-8584

The **SONGNEWS** is published 3 - 4 times per year by: SONG/ECSONG. Any submissions to the newsletter can be sent to the editor, Bruce w. Thurston, RR # 2 Branchton, ON NOB 1L0 b.thurston@silomail.com or Nut.trees@grimonut.com

ECSONG Executive

Chair: Gordon Wilkinson
gwilkinson001@gmail.com

Past Chair: John Sankey

Vice Chair: Richard Viger

Secretary: Dan Mayo

Treasurer: Gordon Chinnick

Councilors:

Bert Weiss

Bill Watt

Ted McDonald

Paige Cousineau
Webmaster: John Sankey

Grove Coordinators:

Paige Cousineau - Lavant Shagbarks

John Adams - FRP grove

Jim Ronson - Perth Wildlife Reserve

Gordon Wilkinson - Hardy Heartnuts

Daniel Buckles - Champlain Oaks

Bill Watt - Nepean Creek

Roman Popadiouk - Sawmill Creek

NUTS ABOUT HEARTNUT COOKING

This unique cookbook is the only book dedicated solely to the heartnut. The book is priced at \$12. Please add \$3.50 for mailing. For special quantity price, contact: Gordon Chinnick, Treasurer, 722 6th Concession Rd, Walsingham, ON NOE 1X0

SONG Website: www.songonline.ca

Be sure to check it for updates on meetings, read about nut farming, post your nuts or nut products to sell online. Send your free posting to: Ernie Grimo, President, 979 Lakeshore Rd, RR3, Niagara/Lake, On L0S 1J0 or: nut.trees@grimonut.com

Inside This Issue

Page

Acting Presidents Message Ernie Grimo	2
Coming Events	2
Hickories are Getting Better, E. Grimo	3,4
My Mystery Hickory	5
Recipes	6,7
Classifieds	9, 10
Membership Form	10

Library Corner - Gord Wilkinson

This part of the page is now open to members who would like reference information or articles written by NNGA or SONG/ECSONG members. Gordon has a nearly complete set of NNGA Annual Reports and a complete set of SONG News issues to research.

SONG/ECSONG Archive

Have you visited ECSONG? Click the tab at the bottom of the SONG website to see the work that was done there? If you click on the SONGNEWS tab, you will be impressed to find all SONGNEWS issues from the beginning of SONG in 1972. Enthusiastic members of ECSONG did this for all members and visitors alike. There is plenty of reading there for the new as well as old members. Enjoy!

Have you renewed for 2022?

It's time for your annual membership. Check your envelope for the year you are paid up. You can renew for 2022 now! Please renew now!

Acting President's Message -Ernie Grimo

It has been a long 2-year pandemic hiatus and it isn't over yet. Some predict that it will always be with us like the measles, another disruptive virus. However, this new virus can infect you repeatedly, especially when you have some measure of waning immunity. Periodic booster shots may become the new routine. Hopefully they will roll out with less delay and confusion than previously done.

We have cancelled our March Annual Meeting 2 years in a row, along with our other meetings and we are about to repeat this cycle until herd immunity comes to pass. I will continue as acting President until we can hold a meeting to elect our officers. If you know of someone interested in holding office, let us know. You can contact me ernie.grimo@yahoo.com or reach Bruce Thurston, our editor at thurston@bell.net.

All is not lost, ECSONG is holding a virtual Zoom meeting on January 22, 2022, from 1:30 to 4:30 pm. Be sure to check the website for information on the meeting at: <https://www.songonline.ca/calendar.htm>. All SONG members are welcome to join in especially if you have something to contribute. The ECSONG Chair, Gordon Wilkinson, will host the meeting.

Please be sure to visit the SONG Facebook page. On your Facebook page do a search for 'Society of Ontario Nut Growers', click and you are in. We have more Facebook friends than SONG members, so join in. Please remember to keep your (EC)SONG membership up to date. Check your envelope label to see if a renewal is needed. If you receive your newsletters by email, check you spam folder to be sure you don't miss your renewal notice.

There have been many contributors to the Facebook page and only a few to our newsletter. Please keep in mind that our organization is only strong if we participate by writing to our editor with your remarks, questions, comments, findings, and ideas. This is how we keep our newsletter alive. We can't just leave the writing up to one or two members. Our fall meeting is the most difficult to plan. If you know a place we should visit or an agenda we should have, let us know.

This issue of SONG News has a hickory tree family theme. The hickories have not been given their fair share of exposure. The shagbark for instance is native over a wide range in Ontario and parts of Quebec. The range can be increased more widely with new plantings. New selections have been introduced to make the species more interesting. I hope you enjoy the reading.

COMING EVENTS

ECSONG ANNUAL MEETING: Saturday, January 22nd, 2022 at 2PM. The unravelling Covid situation and tighter government regulations on group size (plus commonsense) has forced us to change our in-person Winter Meeting and AGM to a virtual meeting on ZOOM. Date and time remains the same.

SONG SPRING MEETING: Due to the rapidly increasing numbers of COVID there will not be a spring meeting this year.

SONG ANNUAL AUCTION: Due to the rapidly increasing numbers of COVID there will not be a auction this year.



This is a stand of Young Shagbark Hickories that I found growing at Westfield Pioneer Village there is 11 trees in this stand. Judging from the nut litter on the ground around they appear to be producing.

Hickories Are Getting Better -by Ernie Grimo

Except for the pecan, the hickory family has been overlooked by breeders. This job of finding superior hickories has been left up to backyard growers, enthusiastic nut explorers and collectors. Most selections have been found in the wild and none have become commercially suitable. The reason hickory has been left at the back door for improvement is simple. It would take too long to breed new improved selections from a wild nut with so many imperfections. Most seedling hickories take 10-20 years to begin bearing and many more years to evaluate them. Unless the dedicated researcher is young and has land that can be left unproductive for a long period of time, breeding hickory is not practical work.

Continued on Pg.4

Continued from Pg.3

The pecan, a member of the *Carya* family, is the exception because it already had wild characteristics that made it a suitable crop to harvest commercially. The oval shaped thin shelled nut opened easily yielding a relatively small, tasty treat. Candy makers and processors prefer the small nut halves in their products. As a result, wild 'native' pecans are still harvested today. Research stations have taken on the breeding role to develop commercial selections that now dominate the retail market.

There are two edible native hickory species that require attention. They are the shagbark and the shellbark hickory. The hybrids including hican (native crosses of hickory x pecan) and other hybrids should also be included. The bitternut hickory is the hardest *Carya* species and crosses including this species might extend the range of edible hickories into colder zones.

Selections in each species have their merits and shortcomings. Shagbark hickories generally are small nuts, just a little larger than a large hazelnut, and they have a shell that requires a vice grip or a hammer to crack, but the flavour is wonderful. The fine flavoured shellbark can be as large as a walnut but has a shell that is rock hard and a nut that requires a long season to ripen, thus not for colder climates. Hybrids that lean towards pecan in shell structure with hickory flavour show some promise.

However, we are moving in the right direction. Through membership in the Northern Nut Growers Association and SONG, selection have been brought to our attention that otherwise would disappear. I mentioned in another article about the complex 'Etter' hickory. I consider the 'Etter' to be the most advanced hickory we have to date. It is large like a shellbark with a shell like a shagbark. The nut cracks releasing the kernel in large pieces, often whole halves. The flavour is characteristically hickory.

I considered 'Grainger' to be the best shagbark for many years. The nut is almost as large as a shellbark, and it cracks out in halves and large pieces. It originated in Kentucky and so it is slow to finish ripening and dropping the nuts. It is annual bearing with good crops. The one failing for me is that 50 per cent or more of the nuts needed to be hand hulled, adding to the post-harvest labour.

In recent years SONG members have brought their shagbark discoveries to my attention. Paul Lapp, from the Montreal area discovered a tree along Pellet Creek that has nuts double the size of most wild nuts. The nuts are well filled and crack out in halves and large pieces.

An old selection from Waterford, Ontario area was discovered early in the last century and named 'Neilson' after the researcher at the Vineland Experimental Farm. Horace Troup, my friend and mentor, gave me the grafting wood for this tree in the early 1970's.

The 'Neilson' nut is more than double the size of other wild nuts and was the best find for the time in our area. It filled the shell well and cracked moderately well. Its most outstanding characteristic was its reproductive nature. Most wild trees would have one superior offspring in one or more million seedlings. 'Neilson', I estimate would produce one superior offspring in 1000 or fewer seedlings. My 'Neilson' trees are surrounded by other superior selections, so the chances of getting a superior offspring improves substantially.

I took a greater interest in 'Neilson' when a customer from Eastern Ontario reported that he had one favorite tree out of ten that he purchased from me in the late 70's or early 80's. He sent nut samples that rivaled 'Neilson' in size and shape. Upon cracking them I discovered that it was superior to 'Neilson' in cracking quality. A tree from Eastern Ontario where the climate is zone 5 made the tree even more enticing. I since acquired grafting wood from this tree and named it 'Blyth' after the owner of the tree.

I had been following several seedlings of 'Neilson' in my own orchard for a number of years and one showed considerable promise. I finally named it 'Ryan'. The nut is the same size as 'Neilson' with better cracking quality. The nut often cracks out in two halves. It is similar to 'Grainger' in these respects. It has been annually productive with crops so large that branches broke down from the weight of the crop.

We have come a long way in the search for improved hickory trees. It is the pursuit that leads to victory.

My Mystery Hickory

I received grafting wood from Fred Ryser from Ohio in 1977, grafted a pecan rootstock and planted it in the orchard in 1981. I asked for and received wood labeled 'Keystone' shellbark hickory. When the tree started to bear, I noticed that it was different from my other shellbark hickory trees. The shell was thin like a shagbark rather than the thick hard shell of the 'Henry' and other shellbark trees I had. At first, I thought that this was normal for 'Keystone'.

Tyler Halvin purchased a tree from me and was surprised when he noted that the tree produced a compound leaf of 5 leaflets like a shagbark and not the typical 7 leaflet compound of the shellbark. I assured him it was a graft from my 'Keystone' tree. When Fred Blankenship from Kentucky, a hickory collector, asked about it, he questioned the authenticity of my selection too.

This got me thinking that I had a bud sport modified tree. This happens occasionally with other plants. For instance, there are several clones of 'Delicious' apple due to buds that had mutated, producing an apple with more red colouring. It never occurred to me that my tree was more complicated than that.

As communication links spread out, I received emails from two other growers. One from Buzz Ferver of Perfect Circle Farm in Vermont, and a judge at the Pennsylvania Farm Show. He received nuts from us to compare and identify the tree. He sent us pictures of a nut that looked strikingly similar to my 'Keystone'. He went further to describe that not only was my tree not 'Keystone', but it was a hybrid.

Zach Elfers gave more historical evidence to my case. 'Keystone', a shellbark hickory, was found by Fayette Etter, a collector extraordinaire near Fannettsburg, PA alongside the Conococheague Creek. Etter also had a McAllister hican cross (shellbark x pecan x bitternut hickory) on his Pennsylvania farm. Beside it he had a Weschcke shagbark hickory. Elfers deduced that the tree I have is a (Weschcke shagbark hickory x McAllister hican) that was called 'Etter' hican. Since a hican is a pecan x hickory cross, it would be a stretch to call the 'Etter' tree a hican. It would be better to call it a shellbark hybrid or simply the 'Etter' hybrid, since the nut looks more like a shellbark hickory than anything else.

Elfers goes on to say that the 'Etter' hybrid has multiple characteristics of pecan, bitternut hickory, shellbark hickory and shagbark hickory. I quote his other remarks, "You can see the pecan and bitternut traits in the thinness of the pencil like buds, the thin leathery husks, and the lack of convolutions inside the shell. The kernel pops out free of any lobe pinching. The nut is large, and the shell is very thin.

The shaggy bark trait seems to have become dominant despite the other species' genes present. The form of the tree is like a shagbark with upright columnar form and lateral branching. The leaflets of 5 (with occasional sixes?) take after the Weschcke parent in number but also resemble strongly the McAllister parent in shape and appearance.

It will be exciting when we are able to do DNA barcoding on some of these cultivars and get "for real" answers. For now I trust my deductive reasoning. After all, Etter's farmhouse had a giant McAllister on one side and a giant Weschcke on the other. It's not a stretch that he was planting out his Weschcke nuts. There are several other trees remaining at his farm which also seem to be grown out from Weschcke seeds."

I thank my fellow nut growers for putting me straight on the tree I have. I have several other cases where the scion wood was mislabelled, and I found out years later that what I had was not true to name. This occurs more frequently with seedlings called by the mother's name. A bad seedling can ruin the reputation of a good named selection. I try to make this difference very clear on my website.



RECIPES

Wild Hickory Nut Shortbread Cookies Recipe

by Tama Matsuoka Wong

Ingredients

- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, softened
- 2 1/4 teaspoon zest from 1 orange (optional)
- 3 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 4 2 cups (about 10 ounces) all-purpose flour
- 5 3/4 cup (about 2 1/2 ounces) sifted confectioner's sugar
- 6 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 7 1/2 cup roughly and finely chopped wild hickory nuts (see note)

Directions

1. Cream butter in a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment at medium-low speed. Alternatively, beat with a wooden spoon in a bowl until creamy and aerated. Add the orange zest and salt. Next add sugar and flour, stirring until just combined. Finally, stir in the nuts. The dough should hold together but still be dry. Form the cookie dough into 2- by 12-inch log and wrap tightly in plastic wrap or parchment paper. Refrigerate until firm, at least 2 hours and up to overnight.
2. When ready to bake, adjust oven racks to upper and lower middle positions and preheat oven to 325°F and line two baking sheets with parchment paper. Slice the cookie dough into 1/4-inch slices. Arrange on cookie sheets leaving 1-inch between cookies. Bake until the edges are light golden brown, rotating the pans front to back and top to bottom halfway through, 10 to 12 minutes total. Let cool slightly and serve. Fully cooled cookies can be stored in an airtight container at room temperature for up to a week.

HICKORY NUT AMBROSIA

A simple hickory nut recipe you can make without separating the nutmeat from the shell. You'll enjoy this seasonal drink each fall!

- **Ingredients** *2 cups crushed hickory nuts & hickory shells husks removed. (you can use however many cups of hickory nuts you want, just make sure to use 3 times as much water relative to the amount of hickories)
- 6 cup Water
- 1 cup organic grass milk
- 4 Tb honey or pure maple syrup or add to taste

Directions

1. Cut off a square piece of thick cardboard from an old box (2×2 size should be fine), then grab a hammer, and a bowl. Bring these 3 items + your hickory nuts to a flat hard outdoor surface (a concrete driveway is ideal, especially if you want your neighbors to think you're nuts, pun intended). Place one hickory nut at a time on the cardboard, then fold the cardboard over so that it covers the nut (like a hickory nut cardboard sandwich). Smash each nut into smallish pieces with a hammer (you don't have to pulverize them, quartered pieces is plenty small).

Continued on Pg. 7

Continued from Pg.6

Once you get the hang of doing one nut at a time, you can graduate to doing a few at a time to speed things up.

2. Place the smashed hickory nut pieces—both the shell and nut pieces together—into your bowl (both the nutmeat and the shell go into your ambrosia). You'll occasionally get a bad nut that is black inside, so make sure to look at each cracked nut before you add it to your "good nut" bowl. You might even find a small white worm (weevil) that you'll probably want to remove as well.

Take your bowl of hickory nuts and shell pieces and pour them into a measuring bowl. Whatever the quantity of your hickory nut pieces, you'll need to have about 3 times more water than nuts in your simmering pot. So if you have 1 cup of hickory pieces, you'll add 3 cups of water.

Simmer your hickory nuts in a covered pot, stirring vigorously once every 10 minutes or so to help break apart the nuts and unlock more flavour. "Simmering" = a low-medium temperature setting on your stove that brings the mixture to just below boiling. After about 30+ minutes, remove the lid and simmer the hickories for 10-15 more minutes to help the flavors concentrate as the water evaporates. *We've removed the lid and simmered them for up to 2 additional hours and have found the ambrosia to be even richer/more flavorful than the 45 minute version. If you have the time, we suggest cooking longer for a more concentrated flavor.

3. You'll notice that a lot of the nut pieces will separate from the shell when you're simmering your hickories. So, once you're all done simmering your hickories (after 40-45 minutes), skim these little nuggets of goodness off of the surface with a spoon or ladle. Most of the flavor will already be drained out of these hickory nuggets, but they're still good to add to oatmeal, pumpkin bread, or any number of other recipes. Now, pour your entire pot (hickory nuts, shells, and ambrosia) through a pasta colander, strainer, or cheese cloth.

4. Before serving, add milk and maple syrup, and then stir to incorporate. Or let each person add milk and maple syrup to their cups according to their taste preferences.

AND

HAPPY NEW YEAR to ALL

CLASSIFIEDS

GRIMO NUT NURSERY LTD

In business since 1972, we are the only nursery in Canada that specializes in grafted and layered nut trees and a selection of grafted "orphan fruit trees". All listed cultivars are tested in our own orchards before we offer them for sale. While trees can be picked up at the nursery, we ship fresh dug bare root trees in the spring across Canada and the United States. A selection of potted trees is available during the growing season. Free consultation is offered to customers.

Own rooted (layered or cloned) hazelnut trees are available for commercial growers. Grafted and seedling trees are available of heartnut, Persian walnut, black walnut, butternut, sweet chestnut, hazelnut, pecan, hickory, pine nut, and more including a selection of rare hybrids. Fruit trees offered include pawpaw, persimmon, mulberry, fig and quince. We also sell harvesting equipment, tree shelters, nut crackers & Ontario nuts & nut meats. Our 10-page print catalogue is \$1 or two current Canadian letter stamps, **free for SONG members.**

Our on-line catalogue is updated daily as items are available. For information or ordering:

www.grimonut.com

nut.trees@grimonut.com

phone: (905)-Yeh-nuts (905-934-6887)

Fax: 905-935-6887 or write:

Grimo Nut Nursery 979 Lakeshore Rd, RR #3

Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON L0S 1J0

RHORA'S NUT FARM AND NURSERY

We have been in active business for over 39 years and Offer cold hardy trees (Climatic Zone 4) and all of the trees were tested in our orchards before offering them for sale. We are the only nursery in North America that offers as many Different varieties of Edible Nut Pines ranging from climatic Zone 1 – 9. We also offer our selection of nut trees and minor fruits. Trees of Persian Walnut, Japanese Heartnut, Japanese walnut, Black Walnut, Butternut, Buartnut, Chinese Chestnut, Japanese walnut, American Chestnut, Hazelnut (bush type), Trazel, India Tree Hazel, Chinese Tree Hazel, Turkey tree Hazel, Hickories (4 different types), Northern Pecan, Beech, hybrid sweet Oak, Ginkgo and others. Edible nut pines that we offer are: Korean, Armand, Swiss Stone, Swiss stone var. Siberica, Dwarf Siberian, Jeffrey, Russian cedar (Pinus siberica), Pinus Siberica f. humistrata, Pinus Siberica f. coronans, Pinus Siberica f. turosa, Macedonian, and others. Minor fruit trees offered include Paw Paw, Persimmon, Beech plum, Mulberry, Chinese Dogwood, Elderberry, Sea Buckthorn, & Cornelian cherry.

We also offer a variety of Rare & Unusual trees & Shrubs. We also offer solid state pest controls and harvesting equipment for sale. We only Spring ship freshly dug bare rooted trees. Pick up can be arranged as well. Please visit our website for our online catalogue for more detailed information about the above listed trees. Those wanting a printed 22 page catalogue are available for \$5.00 which is refundable when placing an order. To contact us about ordering:

www.nuttrees.com / rhoras@nuttrees.com, phone or fax 905-899-3508, or write us: Rhora's Nut Farm & Nursery, 33083 Wills Road, R. R. #1, Wainfleet, On L0S1V0

...**MEMBERSHIP** benefits in the Society of Ontario Nut Growers (SONG) & ECSONG (Eastern Chapter of SONG) include three yearly newsletters, along with 3 annual meetings in two regions, set to satisfy the needs of both the commercial growers and the hobbyists. For an added bonus, **new members** will receive SONG'S own nut growing manual, **Nut Tree Ontario, A Practical Guide**, a \$20 value, **free**, when you take out a three-year, \$45 membership. Simply ask for your free copy when joining SONG. For added information, view the ECSONG handbook at:

<http://www.songonline.ca/ecsong/> . Fill out the tear off below and send to: **SONG/ECSONG, Gordon Chinnick, Treasurer, 722 6th Concession Rd, Walsingham, ON N0E 1X0** . Your cancelled cheque is your receipt. **Dues can also be paid by e-transfer to: song.treasurer@yahoo.com** .

I prefer to receive email copies of the newsletter ☐. Email: _____

I prefer paper copies ☐. * (Optional for unchanged renewals.)

Name: _____ Address: _____

City* _____ Prov.* _____ Postal Code* _____ Telephone #:(____)____-_____

Date: _____ Renewal:☐ New membership:☐ Payment enclosed for: 3 Years \$45.00 ☐ One year \$17.00 ☐

Please send my free copy of **Nut Tree Ontario, A Practical Guide** with my **new membership** ☐

I would like to purchase my post-paid copy of **Nut Tree Ontario, A Practical Guide**. I enclose \$26.00 (\$29 US) ☐