

**ISSUE 127**  
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**2024**

# SONG NEWS

The Newsletter of the Society of Ontario Nut Growers  
The Eastern Chapter of the Society of Ontario Nut Growers

**WWW.SONGONLINE.CA**

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## 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 N0E 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, Past President, 979 Lakeshore Rd, RR3, Niagara/Lake, ON L0S 1J0 or: nut.trees@grimonut.com

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## 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 2024?**

It's time for your annual membership. Check your envelope for the year you are paid up.  
You can renew for 2024 now! Please renew now!

### **Coming Events**

#### **ECSONG Winter Meeting and AGM:**

**FREE:** All are welcome.

**WHEN:** Saturday, January 20, 2024 from 1:00 to 4:30 pm.

**WHERE:** Kathy Ablett Room, Hunt Club-Riverside Park Community Centre, 3320 Paul Anka Dr, Ottawa. The centre is in McCarthy Park at the intersection of McCarthy Road and Paul Anka Drive.

**WHAT:** Expert presentations on Swamp White Oaks, American Chestnut plantings, and the many nut trees planted by ECSONG members throughout Eastern Ontario. A period for meeting old friends over nut snacks and coffee will be followed by a brief ECSONG AGM that will include the election of Board Members and Officers for the years 2024 - 2025 .

**SNACKS:** Beverages (tea, coffee, and water) will be supplied by ECSONG. Members are asked to bring some item, preferably nut-based, as a sharable snack.

#### **SONG 2024 SPRING AUCTION MEETING**

**FEATURING:** Nut trees galore and more. Trees being auctioned include hazelnut, hardy Persian walnut, ultra-northern pecan, hickory, heartnut, sweet chestnut, pine nut, ginkgo, and hybrids including hicans and walnuts to name a few. As a change of pace, an assortment of unusual fruits and ornamentals may be auctioned. Each year brings different items and always surprises. Members are encouraged to bring things to auction off. Please contact Linda Grimo 905-934-6887 if you plan on bringing more than ten items. This is a money raising event for the SONG/ECSONG treasury. It receives 30% of the proceeds.

**DATE:** Sunday May 05, 2024

**TIME:** 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. Members and visitors are always welcome. Cash or cheque only.

**LOCATION:** King Heritage and Cultural Centre, 2920 King Rd, King City, ON L7B 1L6.

**DIRECTIONS:** Take Hwy 401 or Hwy 407 (toll road) to Highway 400 N. Exit King Rd E. Pass Jane St., King Heritage & Cultural Centre is on the left. 2920 King Rd has a cluster of buildings. SONG will meet in the old Laskay school house.

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/King+Heritage+and+Cultural+Centre/@43.9241212,-79.5>

### **Ontario Hazelnut Symposium 2024**

**Date:** March 21, 2024

**Time:** 8:30 – 3:00

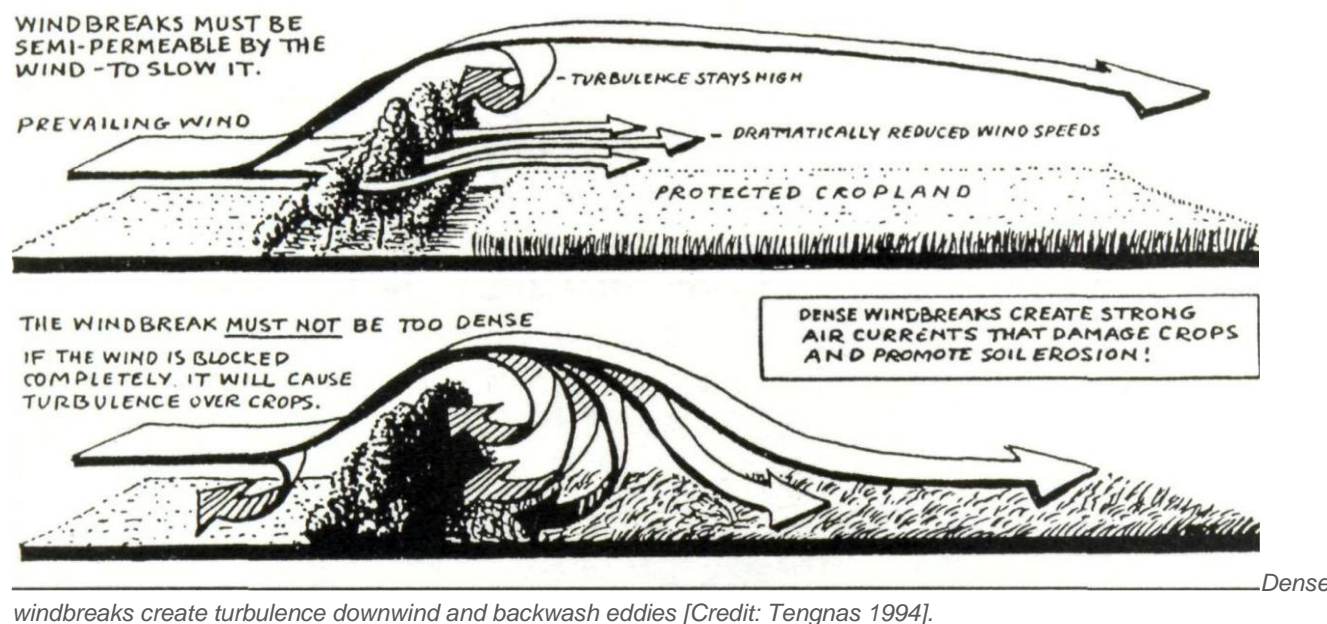
**Location:** Canadian Legion Tillsonburg, on.

**Contact:** [contact@ontariohazelnuts.com](mailto:contact@ontariohazelnuts.com), for further information on pricing and details, please check the website for Ontario hazelnut Assoc. [www.ontariohazelnuts.com](http://www.ontariohazelnuts.com)

## Windbreaks Good and Bad

By Ernie Grimo

In designing a windbreak be sure to place the windbreak trees in a pattern that allows the proper air flow as illustrated below. The illustration uses three levels of trees to allow the air to move through the windbreak. A mixture of evergreen and deciduous trees can create the desired effect.



## Presidents Message

By Linda grimo

Happy New Year!

We will have another exciting year ahead of us. Please watch our website for updates on activities and events in our community. The date for the SONG technical meeting is still being selected and will be announced online and it will be in March.

2023 brought a great harvest for many of us. The summer rains allowed the nuts to fill nicely and we saw higher yields too for every type of nut we grow.

Local nuts are always a big hit, and this year Grimo Nut Nursery collaborated with Oast Brewery in Niagara with their chestnut beer which was sold through the LCBO for the first time. Oast makes chestnut and walnut beers yearly, but we were thrilled they were able to sell through the LCBO as it gives local nuts so much more attention. We hope more craft breweries will begin to produce nut beers in Ontario.

SONG is still recruiting for the role of Editor for our SONG News. Please let us know if you are interested for this volunteer position.

If you use Facebook please follow SONG and join in our fantastic conversations. You can show pictures of your crops, equipment and pose questions to the group.

Linda Grimo



## **ECSONG Field Tours in Prince Edward County – August 19, 2023**

By: Gordon Wilkinson

SONG/ECSONG members and guests, many of whom travelled from as far away as Niagara, Ottawa and Waterloo, enjoyed two very informative and inspiring field tours in beautiful Prince Edward County on Saturday, August 19<sup>th</sup>.

Participants first toured Kelly and Rob Dolihan's commercial hazelnut operation of over 800 layered hazelnut cultivars on 5 acres. Their largest and most mature block of hazelnut trees consisted of the cultivars "Gamma" and "Yamhill" which have begun producing nuts. Participants learned about their extensive irrigation system, their fertilization and weeding protocols, soil characteristics, the history of their farm, as well as many other details related to their orchard operations. Kelly and Rob have ambitious expansion plans and we wish them the very best of success in achieving their goals.

Participants then travelled to a nearby black walnut plantation of close to 2,500 trees owned by long-time ECSONG Board member Ted McDonald. Ted planted all these trees by himself over a period of many years. They were grown either from seed sourced locally or from seedlings purchased from nearby tree nurseries. The earliest block of trees was planted at 7 foot spacing, allowing for self-trimming of side branches, which is ideal for timber production. Following advice given by a well-known nut tree expert and nurseryman, subsequent blocks were planted at 10 foot spacing to allow for heavier branching, which should promote higher nut production.

A very special thanks go to both owners for allowing participants to enjoy their beautiful grounds and impressive expanse of nut trees and for providing a wide variety of non-alcoholic drinks, fruit, and delicious homemade snacks and eating tables for participants to enjoy and converse.



**Some of Kelly and Rob Dolihan's  
Hazelnut trees.**



**Some of the participants at Kelly and  
Rob Dolihan's hazelnut tour.**

# HAPPY NEW YEAR

2024

## Variations on the cracking of black walnut

By Martin Hodgson

Black walnuts are a great tasting potential food source that locally goes nearly unused.

The primary difficulties in using them are twofold.

One - the thick green covering or husk that tends to stain your hands black and rots away into a black mush.  
(There are various machines (homemade\*) that can remove this husk by abrasion)

Secondly- the sturdy nut casing or shell that requires extraordinary efforts for humans to crack open but little effort for squirrels to split the shell open. (maybe we could train squirrels?)

There are well developed harvesting and processing facilities in the central US (Missouri) that use black walnuts but none locally for all intents and purposes.

Those who have tried to crack black walnuts, likely with a hammer of some kind, find the nut meat tends to shatter into many small pieces that have to be separated from the shell fragments. This tends to be too tedious to all but the most determined consumer.

Tests were carried out in 2018 by Geoff Christou where he only superficially dried the black walnut shell but left the nut meat in a relatively undried condition. He was successful in pulling out some intact or nearly intact black walnut meat bodies. They looked like two miniature lungs to some extent.

Apparently the cleaned black walnut shell had undergone only minimal drying which left the nut meat much more flexible and less likely to shatter when cracked.

Last fall I cleaned several bushels of black walnuts in my cement mixer (with water and gravel to abrade the husks), rinsed and then sanitized them in bleach water. I tried two different methods to dry them. Initially they were contained in a milk case over the heating duct in the house which runs constantly but there was little to no heat produced at this time. This went for slightly more than 24 hours. There was only a limited number of nuts in the case so, after a few test trials, I went to the larger capacity available in my nut drier where I placed them in open vegetable baskets in my and forced ambient outside air to blow over them day and night.

I took samples from the bins at different times to see what the crack out looked like. This was a very rudimentary test due to the fluctuating temperatures which were uncontrolled.

I cracked about 10-20 nuts at each point of time, replacing any blanks with new candidates.

Cracking was carried out using a geared lever clamp that applied controlled force to the nut. An effort was made to try cracking the nuts at different orientations but no conclusive optimum direction was determined

### Here is what I observed

The nut meats came out in two conditions. About half of the nut meats were firm, plump, smooth skinned medium brown in colour and fully formed, while the other half were wrinkled, dark brown and only partially filled. I expect that this latter group were early drops that had not completely filled.

**As cleaned and washed, no drying at all** – nut meat was tightly packed into the shell and shattered on extraction.

**Over the house vent – 12hrs** – Nuts slightly drier, nut meat does not shatter as much as before and come out in quarters.

**Over the house vent - 20 hrs.** – Little change in crack out, primarily quarters of nut.

**Over the house vent - 28 hrs.** – Lots of halves and some full double nut meats

**Nuts from the nut drier** – Cracking after 24, 32, 40, 50 100 and 150 hrs. in the drier.

-Some halves were recovered at 24, 32, 40 and 100hrs. None at 50 and 150 hrs.\* (excepting partially filled nuts)

-Nut meats still flexible at 100 hrs hence many ¼'s and ½'s. Occasional whole nut meat.

Best recovery of halves occurred after 24 and 40 hrs. of drying.

-many semi-filled nuts in the mix. Need to sweep "blanks" before main drop.

Continued from Page5

By 150 hrs. of drying nut meats were shattering about the same as black walnuts that had been stored for 12 months in a container. Recovered only ¼'s or less.

### **Conclusions**

The concept of cracking black walnuts somewhere in the earlier stages of drying to extract large sized nut pieces seems to have some merit and is worth of further investigation.

Investigators need to be able to apply a constant level of low heating and air flow to determine a better length of drying and appropriate temperature and air flow.

Also some investigation should be carried out as to the best direction to apply cracking pressure which seemed to affect the resulting integrity of the recovered nut meat. I tried it from all three directions to mixed success, possibly due to the great variation present in nut morphology and source tree. Black walnuts definitely have three different axis to apply force to. Top to bottom, wide side and narrow side.

Of note, the previously dried and stored black walnuts I used for comparison purposes had been stored in a sealed container with uncontrolled temperatures for 12 months. The nut meats were still quite tasty and untainted or rancid.

Yield factoid – I found that ~7 bushels of green black walnuts gives about 1 bushel of cleaned nuts. When I cracked the nuts I got a yield of about 11% on a small sample.

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## **A Huge Mistake in the Transgenic Chestnut**

by Ernie Grimo

It was revealed that a mistake was made in the selection of the Darling chestnut tree in the lab. Darling 54 and Darling 58 were confused in the lab. Instead of multiplying the selected Darling 58, the Darling 54 was used. The gene for resistance in the chestnut was in a different chromosome than the one in Darling 58. The error was not discovered until recently.

In the meantime, research at the American Chestnut foundation with the progeny of the Darling 54 showed poor growth, early death, and chestnut blight disease susceptibility. American Chestnut Foundation announced that it was drawing support for several pending regulatory petitions that would authorize distribution of transgenic Darling 58 trees outside permitted research plots.

The researchers at Syracuse University after 35 years of dedicated work have responded that they are committed to the project. They responded that Darling chestnuts are safe and have better blight resistance than other American chestnuts. They will continue their research responding that multiple approaches are needed to address chestnut restoration. The Darling trees are a valuable first step in the process and further research will identify which varieties are most suitable for large scale restoration.

## The Hican – What is its Future?

by Ernie Grimo

The hican is a cross between a pecan and a hickory. Most hicans are sterile, that is, they do not produce live pollen or set filled nuts. The occasional hican will be fertile. Many fertile hicans have been made public through the Northern Nut Growers Association and some of those are now in public and private collections as grafted trees.

Some hicans are crosses between the pecan and shagbark hickory, others with the shellbark hickory and still others with the bitternut hickory. 'Burton' is a cross between the shagbark hickory and pecan, while 'McAllister' is a shellbark pecan cross, and 'Abbott' is a bitternut hickory cross. The 'Etter' hybrid is a very unusual exception since it is a 3-way cross, Weschcke shagbark x 'McAllister' hican. Almost all hicans to date are natural crosses found in wild stands. 'Etter' is an exception here its parent trees were side by side in the Etter planting in Pennsylvania.

Since the *Carya* species takes so long to produce nuts, cross breeding work with them is not considered by breeders. It takes a lifetime to see results and the results may not be satisfying. It is left up to the amateur to start the cycle of making more hican selections with improved characteristics.

What do we want in a hican for Canada? We want most of the refined characteristics of the pecan including the shape and shell thinness, precocity, disease resistance, as well as the flavour and ease of extracting the nut meat by machine and by hand. We want the northern hardiness of the bitternut hickory that would allow us to grow the nuts in zone 5 or even zone 4.

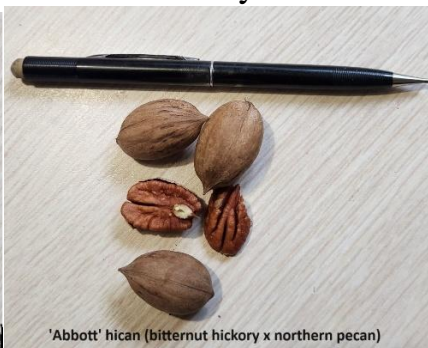
The 'Abbott' hican can lead the way. It has some pecan characteristics, including the pecan shape and shell thinness. It has the early ripening of the bitternut without the bitter taste of the kernel. A breeder needs to be young and hopeful with land to grow a mixture of the ultra-northern pecans and *carya* hybrids to see what offspring will result. A planting like the one at the Grimo Nut Nursery can produce interesting *Carya* combinations in the seedlings and seed that comes from there. More groves are needed to find the ultimate hybrid.



'Burton' hican (shagbark hickory x pecan)



'Etter' Hybrid ('Weschcke' shagbark x 'McAllister' Hican)



'Abbott' hican (bitternut hickory x northern pecan)



## **Hazelnut Pollinizing Solutions**

By Ernie Grimo

I was puzzled and distressed this year when one of our hazelnut growers in Niagara-on-the-Lake reported that he had no crop of hazelnuts to sell to us this year. He suggested that he had a frost during bloom that killed the catkins and wiped out the pollen. The female bloom can withstand these frost periods while the male catkins are less hardy when they are ready to shed pollen. His 2 acre hazelnut planting consisted of Gene, Slate and seedlings as pollinizers. Alternatively, the crop at the Grimo farm was better than average. What could cause such a difference? The Grimo planting is within a kilometer of Lake Ontario while the other grower was 5 kilometers away, where frost can easily settle.

This indicates the importance of having early and late pollinizers. However, the hazelnut grower had seedling pollinizers and among them there would likely be early and late pollen producers and yet there was no crop. Grimo has only had one crop failure in his memory, and in that year 4 trees had nearly 50% of the total crop for 200 trees. Those trees were 'Gene', 'Slate', 'Cheryl' and 'Linda', all selected trees from a major breeding project. This is a contradiction to what happened to this grower.

Hazelnuts generally bloom in March in Ontario. It is to be expected that there will be frosty conditions many years when pollen is being shed, especially in areas where March and early April frosts are common. These would ordinarily not be areas suited to growing hazelnuts. To guard against crop failure it is not likely that hardier pollinizer selections will be the answer or early and late ones some years. Other solutions will likely be the answer. There are two that need to be considered.

A solution that is used with the grape industry is the use of wind machines that move frost killing air out of the orchard allowing warmer air from above to drop down to the orchard floor. My neighbour, who surrounds me, is a grower of vinifera grapes. He has wind machines on both sides of the farm. Since his machines went in about 15 years ago, I believe I have had better crops. This has certainly been true with heartnuts and Persian walnuts that are more sensitive to late frost than other nut trees. My hazelnut crop has been more regular and productive even though I have made little effort until now to control bud mite. One wind machine can control the temperature for up to 2 ha (5 A) or more. A supplier of a towable blower is:



A towable wind machine that frost protects 4A



Continued from Pg. 8

<<http://towandblow.co.nz/international-agents-distributors-for-tow-blow-frost-protection/>>. Most growers have permanently placed wind machines that are also available.

The second solution is to have stored frozen or fresh pollen available and spray or blow it out into the orchard when females are in full bloom. This could be an easy solution to increase pollination in any year. Pollen can be gathered with a vacuum and stored for later use. There does not seem to be a hazelnut pollen harvester in existence but pollen has been collected and used to increase other crops. Information on the length of time and the best way hazelnut pollen can be stored is available at:

<<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/BF00038973>>.

A good example of vacuum harvesting is from a study in New Zealand where kiwi fruit pollen was collected to increase the crop of kiwi fruit. Check this site for the experimental process used.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/01140671.1991.10422881>

It is always wise to be pre-emptive, to anticipate and prevent problems before they occur. This can be considered after a planting is established and a pollination problem is noted.

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### **Notes from Butternut Farm – Courtland Ontario**

**By Martin Hodgson**

EFB and other things. It has become obvious to most recently that the Jefferson variety of hazelnut is very susceptible to Eastern Filbert Blight (EFB). The 450 or so Jefferson that I planted in 2016 along with about 75 Yamhill have grown up nicely to heights of about 8' (2.5 m)- but they are now showing significant infections in certain areas of the orchard that are the closest (and downwind ) to another site of infected Jeffersons some 800' (250 m) away. I have totally removed the later site of infection and I am vigorously removing infected wood from the 2016 planted orchard. So if you do have the Jefferson variety of hazelnut trees check them out and prune away any infected wood. Remember to cut at least 19" (1/2 m) below the lowest evidence of EFB seen on any branches. EFB will get into the roots and kill the tree ultimately if it is not removed in time. I can speak of this from personal experience what happened to my first orchard some 20 yrs. ago. One thing of note is that the Yamhills are not as susceptible to contracting the EFB as the Jeffersons. The Yamhills are scattered throughout the orchard and seem to have contracted EFB about 10 times less frequently than the Jeffersons even when they are side by side. All I can suggest is to spray your orchard for EFB. There are a number of approved pesticides for the task and it is easy to vary up the types used to avoid the development of resistance in the EFB. Another note that I observed in 2023 is that the squirrels seemed to not come to the orchard in such persistent numbers as they had in 2022 were I basically lost my entire crop to them and other varmints. This may be a seasonal thing as there were no black walnuts or acorns last year and this year those trees were loaded with nuts. Give this comment a thought and let us know how your crop did this year compared to last.

Regards Martin Hodgson

## 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. Consultation is offered free to customers.

Own rooted (layered or cloned) hazelnut trees are available for commercial growers. Grafted and seedling trees are available of heartnut, northern (Persian) walnut, black walnut, butternut, sweet chestnut, hazelnut, ultra-northern pecan, hickory, pine nut, and more including a selection of rare hybrids. Fruit trees include pawpaw, persimmon, mulberry, fig and quince. The super food plants we offer include aronia, elderberry, saskatoon, and Haskap berry. We sell harvesting equipment, tree shelters, books, nut crackers, and Ontario nuts. We start taking preorders for the following year in July. **Our online catalogue is updated daily as items are available.** [www.grimonut.com](http://www.grimonut.com)

[nut.trees@grimonut.com](mailto: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

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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.nutttrees.com](http://www.nutttrees.com) / [rhora@nutttrees.com](mailto:rhora@nutttrees.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](mailto:song.treasurer@yahoo.com)**.

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