

“The Story of Chestnut

The American chestnut was once one of the most important tree species in the Eastern United States. Trees often had a diameter of more than 10 feet and grew to heights well over 100 feet

Chestnut wood was used to make furniture, shingles, siding, and fence posts. It was an extremely good wood for use outdoors due to the large amount of tannic acid in the wood that kept it from deterioration. The chestnuts themselves were also a very important food source for people, livestock and wildlife.

In 1904, the American chestnut came to a catastrophic end as a major forest species. A fungus came into the country from Asian chestnut trees that were imported to the Bronx Zoo in New York City. The fungal blight quickly spread through the air to the zoo's American chestnut trees, and throughout the entire North American range of the chestnut. By the 1940's the entire range of the American chestnut was wiped out. The American chestnut is not completely extinct. The root systems are not affected by the blight and often sprout to form new chestnut trees. Once the sprouts are a few years old though, they once again become infected with the blight and die back again.

Today, the only way to get chestnut is as a reclaimed wood

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